



# Silver Dreams Fund Learning and Evaluation Contract: Final report June 2014

**Ecorys**

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# Executive Summary

This is a summary of the Final Report which presents the findings of the evaluation of the Big Lottery Fund's Silver Dreams Fund conducted by Ecorys. For more information about the evaluation please contact: [rachel.gardner@uk.ecorys.com](mailto:rachel.gardner@uk.ecorys.com).

## What is the Silver Dreams Fund?

The Silver Dreams Fund was a £10 million programme which sought to address the gaps in provision by challenging organisations to come up with an innovative idea for a project that would *"pioneer ways to help vulnerable older people deal more effectively with life-changing events"*.<sup>1</sup>

Each Silver Dreams Fund project had to demonstrate they reflected all of the following themes:

- **Helping older people to help themselves** - designed to empower older people to find their own solutions by involving them in all aspects of designing, running and managing a project.
- **Working with others** - emphasised the importance of collaborating with other public and private organisations and local people of all ages to meet the needs of older people more effectively.
- **Managing better** - focused on services or activities which will help older people prepare for and manage key transitions in their lives.
- **Volunteering** - unlocked the skills and experiences of older people and encouraged those who are more active to support others.
- **Testing new ways of working** - either by setting up new services or replicating successful services elsewhere but in a different context or in a new way.

A total of **37 projects** were awarded between £50,000 and £200,000 to deliver activities for a period of 12 to 18 months. The Silver Dreams Fund projects were led by a range of voluntary and community sector organisations ranging from national-level and well established organisations to small social enterprises and local community organisations. The funded projects aimed to tackle a range of transitions including bereavement, moving home and making decisions about healthcare.

The projects were all delivered to support older people; however, there were a variety of specific target groups which included the bereaved, those with dementia, older men and those with a particular disability or illness. The types of activities were designed to cater to the needs and preferences of each target group and the transitions they faced. This included peer befriending and advocacy support on hospital wards, volunteer-led training sessions around personal development and problem-solving skills led by injured former military personnel, development of outdoor skills such as hen keeping, and social activities such as dining groups.

Over **11,350 older people** took part in the 37 Silver Dreams Fund projects<sup>2</sup> and more than **101,126 hours of support** were provided. Over **1,859 volunteers** were involved in the projects contributing more than **47,174 hours** of support. Many projects viewed older people's involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of the projects as an important element of their work.

<sup>1</sup> The Big Lottery Fund (2011) The Silver Dreams Fund: Call for Ideas - Guidance notes  
[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/silverdream\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/silverdream_guidance.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Source: monitoring data collated by Ecorys (to April 2014)

At the end of the Silver Dreams Fund a number of the pilot projects were awarded up to £1 million each to develop their pioneering ideas into a flagship project. The first stage of the flagship application process began in April 2013 and the **flagship projects** were announced in March 2014. Due to the quality of the applications, available funding was increased to £10 million to enable ten projects to become Silver Dreams Fund Flagships and each will scale up their activities for a further three to four years. The flagship projects are: Scene Enterprises' In Good Hands project; Care & Repair England's Silverlinks project; Northern Shape's Henpower project; The Older People's Advocacy Alliance's Cancer, Older People and Advocacy (COPA); Compassion in Dying's End-of Life Rights Community Advocacy (ELRA); the Terrence Higgins Trust's Health, Wealth and Happiness project; Age UK Barrow and District's Barrow RespectAbility; Age Concern Durham's Come Dine with Us; Grandparents Plus's Relative Experience; and Aquarius Action's Time of our Life.

## Evaluation approach

Our approach involved both formative and summative elements and was based upon a robust and evidence-based outcome evaluation framework. In addition, we have also undertaken an evaluation of the new programme management processes employed by the Big Lottery Fund which has been reported separately.

In summary, the evaluation involved:

- development of an evaluation framework and common indicators to measure outcomes;
- provision of a package of self-evaluation support to projects;
- programme level work to provide independent primary qualitative research and to validate findings from self-evaluations;
- a range of learning activities; and
- analysis and reporting.

## Key findings

- **Involving older people** in the design, delivery and development of projects was a key theme and was fully embraced by projects. The level of involvement was assessed with reference to the Wilcox Guide to Effective Participation<sup>3</sup> which ranges from projects that have no involvement of beneficiaries through to helping beneficiaries to develop and carry out initiatives. The majority of Silver Dreams Fund projects achieved participation at **level 2 (consultation)** or **level 3 (deciding together)**. Deciding together was particularly popular with projects with an emphasis on involving older people at the design phase and then continuing this involvement throughout the project, leading to an increased sense of ownership amongst older people. There were indications that some projects had begun to reach **level 4 (acting together)** with approaches involving co-delivery of sessions. A small number of projects appeared to be close to achieving **Level 5 (supporting independent community initiatives)** by supporting older people in taking forward their own groups and activities.
- Projects highlighted the importance of **involving older people at an early stage** in order to ensure that they can be involved throughout the development and delivery of the project. Projects were aware of the **need to be flexible** about how older people can be involved and also provide training and support where this is required. In many cases, **time to encourage older people** to make the transition to being involved was needed. In particular, projects were aware of the need to take steps to ensure that all older people, including more vulnerable groups, can be appropriately involved in different aspects of the design, development and delivery of a project.

<sup>3</sup> Wilcox D; 1995; Guide to Effective Participation; York: Rowntree

- **Volunteering** was a key aspect of the majority of the Silver Dreams Fund projects. Projects learned many lessons from engaging, recruiting and supporting volunteers, particularly adult volunteers. At the outset, it was valuable for the projects to carefully consider the fit between the profile of the volunteers and the needs of the project to ensure that they recruited suitable volunteers. Once they had been through this process projects had to *ensure that their promotion of the volunteer positions was tailored* to the type of volunteer they wanted to attract, such as local newspaper adverts to attract local older volunteers. Projects were also very aware of ensuring that *appropriate training and on-going support was provided* for volunteers, which included providing extra support for volunteers that are new to volunteering or that low confidence. A few projects also learned the *importance of finding different ways of keeping volunteers engaged* in the project if there were gaps in their involvement.
- Four key **project models of intervention** were identified: peer befriending or advocacy; older people supporting each other; volunteer-led delivery of activities; and activities that bridge the gap between services. However, many projects adopted a hybrid approach, incorporating more than one of the identified models. All models were shown to have effective elements and the decision about which model(s) to adopt was found to reflect both the project's target group and the type of transition older people faced. For example, a *peer befriending or advocacy* model was particularly effective for health focused projects as it was viewed as a sensitive way of providing support to older people with particular health conditions. *Beneficiaries supporting each other* was seen to be effective in empowering older people to help themselves, as well as others. A *volunteer-led* model worked well in engaging a particular group of older people that could not usually access activities. *Activities that bridge the gap between services* were particularly effective in addressing needs in the health, social care, housing and policing sectors.
- There were some key lessons from delivering their projects, irrespective of the type of model adopted. Projects found that partners sometimes misunderstood the project's purpose although talking through the project's focus face-to-face tended to overcome this challenge. Projects also become aware that it *takes time to build trust with older people*, particularly more vulnerable groups, such as older people who have been bereaved. An awareness of the type of volunteer and project staff required to effectively deliver a project was also needed. Projects highlighted that face-to-face engagement with volunteers as well as clear marketing materials helped to ensure they recruited suitable volunteers. Through the Silver Dreams Fund, the projects *learned to think creatively about how to ensure staff and volunteers were ready to support new beneficiaries* from the start. Solutions included appointing a paid volunteer coordinator who oversaw the volunteers and could provide short notice support to new beneficiaries if volunteers were unavailable.
- **Partnership working** took a variety of forms during the Silver Dreams Fund. Projects found that formal *partnership working was particularly useful where a specific partner is crucial* to the effective delivery of the project e.g. a delivery partner or an organisation with specialist expertise. In other cases projects found *informal partnerships to be very useful for generating referrals*, and to link with organisations that provide complementary or in kind services or expertise. For both types of partnerships, projects learned that time is needed to find suitable partners and to build trust and mutual understanding, and on-going communication is vital to maintain the partnership.
- The experience of projects was that engagement with the *statutory sector* – particularly the health sector partners – is challenging. This was a common issue across several projects which limited their ability to develop successful partnerships and deliver the activities or project models they had envisaged. These challenges were primarily due to difficulties negotiating complex structures and hierarchies, finding and talking to the right decision maker, obtaining appropriate permissions and buy in for the project model or activity, and being required to gain ethical approval. Issues with data sharing were also a common barrier to progress. There was a need to

be aware that these issues are likely to be problematic for projects funded in this area in future (for example, for areas applying for funding under the Ageing Better investment) particularly where statutory partners are not engaged at an early enough stage or with sufficient lead-in time.

- Another aspect of the Silver Dreams Fund was to **challenge perceptions of ageing**. This was not a central focus for many projects, although most projects felt that they had challenged perceptions of older people to some extent. In terms of challenging perceptions of older people more widely, there were instances of projects proactively working with sections of the community, such as older people sharing their skills with young people and older people becoming assets to the community by growing food to support the local food bank. Changing perceptions of ageing at a regional or national level was recognised to be a very difficult and huge undertaking. However, there were some examples of Silver Dreams Fund projects that had begun to challenge perceptions more widely by **highlighting older people as inspirational figures** and raising awareness of the part older volunteers had played in the project particularly through blog posts and articles in both national and regional press.
- Both quantitative and qualitative evidence suggested that projects helped to **smooth transitions for older people**. Analysis of the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale revealed statistically significant **increases in respondents' mental wellbeing** for 13 projects which spanned the different types of models identified<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, qualitative evidence illustrated that providing on-going contact with the project and **opportunities for getting out of the house made a huge difference** to beneficiaries, irrespective of how the support was delivered. Typically, projects felt that beneficiaries had increased social contact with other people through the Silver Dreams Fund activities. Group sessions and mentoring, whether delivered by volunteers or other beneficiaries, appeared to be particularly effective in improving social contact between older people.
- The **achievement of positive outcomes by older people** as a result of their engagement with projects has potential to reduce their need to access other support or services. Older people survey findings suggest a **reduction in the frequency of use of GP and hospital services** amongst respondents, which illustrates the potential for projects of this type to help to reduce demand for healthcare services by supporting improvements in older people's health and wellbeing. The funded activity appears to have played a part in generating a change in these outcomes for older people, as when asked to report the extent to which the Silver Dreams Fund contributed to a change in health and wellbeing outcomes, over half of the sample suggested that at least some of the change they experienced had been due to their involvement in the project.
- A key focus of the Silver Dreams Fund was to identify to what extent the projects can be **scaled up or replicated**. The Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale<sup>5</sup> was used to help identify and define the various levels. The majority of projects reached **level 2**<sup>6</sup> of this scale as they had captured the positive change for beneficiaries using a before and after survey which included validated scales for life satisfaction and mental wellbeing. In addition, many projects developed different types of tools and manuals to aid replication. The intention was that this work would draw upon a robust evidence base but for many projects, evaluation evidence was either not available before they did this or was not strong enough to be certain of causality. Future Big Lottery Fund programmes such as the Fulfilling Lives strategic programmes, and Ageing Better in particular, will allow greater opportunity through the test and learn ethos to enable this to occur and develop a much stronger evidence base and conditions for replication.

<sup>4</sup> Source: older people survey data collated by Ecorys (to April 2014)

<sup>5</sup> Nesta and Nuffield Trust, Evidence for ageing well at home: Bringing together social investors with evidence leaders

<sup>6</sup> Level 2 of Nesta's Scaling Up scale is 'You capture data that shows positive change, but you cannot confirm you caused this'

- **Blogging** was a successful aspect of the Silver Dreams Fund. It was also a new approach for many of the projects which led to a number of lessons learned. Projects were keen to involve volunteers and beneficiaries in writing the blog posts but became aware that there was some nervousness about blogging. This was overcome in one instance by *volunteers writing their blog posts down and staff uploading them* on to the project blog. There was also a need to *think about the blog's audience* and the type of blogs they would want to read. Some of the projects posted blogs that were very focused on project delivery while others included think pieces to catch the attention of key stakeholders. Thinking about *how to track the number of readers of the blog* at the outset was also considered to be valuable. A few projects realised towards the end of delivery that it would have been useful to set up Google Analytics to track the number of visitors to their blog in order to demonstrate the value of their blog as a dissemination tool.



# 1.0 Introduction

This is the final report to the Big Lottery Fund presenting the findings of the evaluation of the Silver Dreams Fund. The evaluation was conducted by Ecorys between April 2012 and May 2014. The key sources of data for this report are the project application forms, self-completion proformas, online blogs and final reports; case study visits and ethnographic research undertaken by Ecorys; case studies produced by Silver Dreams Fund projects and validated by Ecorys; evidence collected by community evaluators; and project level monitoring data. This report is based upon the data available on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014.

## 1.1 The Silver Dreams Fund

The Silver Dreams Fund was a £10 million programme which sought to address the gaps in provision by challenging organisations to come up with an innovative idea for a pilot project that would "pioneer ways to help vulnerable older people deal more effectively with life-changing events".<sup>7</sup>

Each Silver Dreams Fund project had to work towards all of the following programme outcomes:

- **Helping older people to help themselves** - designed to empower older people to find their own solutions by involving them in all aspects of designing, running and managing a project.
- **Working with others** - emphasised the importance of collaborating with other public and private organisations and local people of all ages to meet the needs of older people more effectively.
- **Managing better** - focused on services or activities which will help older people prepare for and manage key transitions in their lives.
- **Volunteering** - unlocked the skills and experiences of older people and encouraged those who are more active to support others.
- **Testing new ways of working** - either by setting up new services or replicating successful services elsewhere but in a different context or in a new way.

A total of **37 projects** were awarded between £50,000 and £200,000 to deliver activities for a period of 12 to 18 months. The Silver Dreams Fund projects were led by a range of voluntary and community sector organisations ranging from national-level and well established organisations such as the Terrence Higgins Trust and RNIB to small social enterprises and local community organisations such as Future Roots and the Abbey Community Centre. The funded projects aimed to tackle a range of transitions including bereavement, isolation, moving home and making decisions about healthcare. The projects were all delivered to support older people; however, there were a variety of specific target groups which included the bereaved, those with dementia, older men and those with a particular disability or illness. The types of activities were designed to cater to the needs and preferences of each target group and the transitions they faced, and included peer befriending and advocacy support on hospital wards, volunteer-led training sessions around personal development and problem-solving skills led by injured former military personnel, development of outdoor skills such as hen keeping, and social activities such as dining groups.

Over **11,350 older people** took part in the 37 Silver Dreams Fund projects<sup>8</sup> and more than **101,126 hours of support** were provided. Over **1,859 volunteers** were involved in the projects contributing more than **47,174 hours** of support. Many projects viewed older people's involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of the projects as an important element of their work (see Chapter 2).

<sup>7</sup> The Big Lottery Fund (2011) The Silver Dreams Fund: Call for Ideas - Guidance notes  
[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/silverdream\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/silverdream_guidance.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Source: monitoring data collated by Ecorys (to April 2014)

The Silver Dreams Fund provided an opportunity to test new ways of working. For instance, the involvement of the Daily Mail as a **media partner** was a tailored approach negotiated by the Fund's press team. The Daily Mail supported the launch of the Silver Dreams Fund, including helping to recruit three older volunteers to join Big Lottery Fund's advisory panel, and also published several articles about the Silver Dreams Fund since the projects launched (see Chapter 7).

The Silver Dreams Fund was the first Big Lottery Fund programme to encourage projects to write a **blog** on a bi-monthly basis as part of testing out different grant management approaches. Projects were provided with training in use of the blogging software and a guide for the suggested content of their blogs. The initial plan was for the blog posts to replace the standard monitoring template but it was found that this was not possible due to the need for the usual mid and end of grant reports to be provided for audit purposes. However, the majority of Silver Dreams Fund projects embraced this aspect with many blogging far more frequently than the suggested bimonthly posts. The content of the blogs varied from promoting activities to providing older people and volunteering case studies or think pieces on issues related to their projects. The Big Lottery Fund recognised the potential value of blogging for projects to disseminate their learning to a wider audience and this is explored further in Chapter 7.

At the end of the Silver Dreams Fund a number of the pilot projects were awarded up to £1 million each to develop their pioneering ideas into a flagship project. The first stage of the flagship application process began in April 2013 and the **flagship projects** were announced in March 2014. Due to the quality of the applications, available funding was increased to £10 million to enable ten projects to become Silver Dreams Fund Flagships and each will scale up their activities for a further three to four years. The flagship projects are:

- Scene Enterprises' In Good Hands.
- Care & Repair England's Silverlinks.
- Northern Shape's Henpower.
- The Older People's Advocacy Alliance's Advocacy on the Wards (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy).
- Compassion in Dying's End-of Life Rights Community Advocacy (ELRA).
- The Terrence Higgins Trust's Health, Wealth and Happiness.
- Age UK Barrow and District's Barrow RespectAbility.
- Age Concern Durham's Come Dine with Us.
- Grandparents Plus's Relative Experience.
- Aquarius Action's Time of our Life.

## **1.2 Evaluation aims and objectives**

The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the Silver Dreams Fund on **supporting older people to cope with key transitions in their lives** and to identify models of best practice which have the potential to be scaled up or replicated.

The key evaluation questions were:

- What has the impact of the different models of intervention been on supporting older people through transitions in their lives?
- What has been the economic impact of the programme in terms of savings to the state?
- Which models of support are most effective at supporting older people to cope with or manage transitions?
- How have older people been involved in designing and delivering projects and how effective was the nature of the involvement?
- How have organisations met the themes of the Silver Dreams Fund?
- How has the programme challenged perceptions of ageing and led to older people being viewed as an asset in their communities?
- What range and types of organisations have been funded through the programme?
- How innovative or novel are the approaches being delivered by projects?
- How has capacity in organisations been developed in organisations that received funding for additional support? How effective is this model of provision?
- What has been the impact of having a media partner involved in delivering the programme?
- What is the potential for scaling up or replicating the different models of intervention that have been tested through the programme?
- What lessons can the Big Lottery Fund and stakeholders learn from the programme to inform future investments?
- How has learning from the programme been used to inform wider policy and practice?

### 1.3 Evaluation approach

In order to answer the above evaluation questions, our approach involved both formative and summative elements and was based upon a robust and evidence-based outcome evaluation framework. In addition, we have also undertaken an evaluation of the new programme management processes employed by the Big Lottery Fund which has been reported separately.

In summary, the evaluation involved:

- development of an evaluation framework and common indicators to measure outcomes;
- provision of a package of self-evaluation support to projects;
- programme level work to provide independent primary qualitative research and to validate findings from self-evaluations;
- a range of learning activities; and
- analysis and reporting.

The evaluation has produced four reports, provided at six monthly intervals (two interim progress reports and two end of year findings reports), of which this is the final report. In addition, the evaluation has provided an evaluation framework with common indicators, a toolkit with research tools, blog entries and social media activity, three events aimed at projects, and various dissemination activities.

A key early task was to develop a **common framework** for the Silver Dreams Fund projects which included a set of core indicators and further optional indicators which reflected the diversity of the projects. This included a small number of outcome indicators for older people collected via a survey of older people.

The indicators covered the following outcome areas:

- Life satisfaction.
- Mental wellbeing (measured using the shortened form of Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale)<sup>9</sup>.
- Level of home and social care support received.
- Use of healthcare services.

Projects were asked to complete a project proforma, firstly in March 2013 and again in March 2014 to provide information on engagement of older people, delivery approaches, volunteering, partnership working and sharing learning. Proformas were returned by 32 projects in March 2013 and 33 projects in March 2014.

Each project was asked to ensure that 50 participating older people completed the **survey** both at the start of their involvement and at the end in order to capture any change. The projects were also asked to include an attribution question in the end-point survey to give participants the opportunity to tell us how far they think the project was responsible for any change they experienced.

Following a consultation process it was clear that three projects were unable to take part in the survey due to the sensitive nature of their activity; however, these projects captured data qualitatively. A further four projects opted out of the health outcome indicators as these were considered not to be applicable to their work. The remaining projects strived to complete 50 surveys which was particularly challenging for projects that had beneficiaries leaving at short notice without an opportunity to complete the end-point survey. Projects completed, on average, 35 sets of before and after surveys, ranging from 3 and 91 matched sets of surveys. In total, **966** sets of before and after surveys were collected and submitted by projects.

Analysis of monitoring data and survey returns was undertaken to assess the value for money provided by the portfolio and also the potential for this type of activity to generate savings to other providers and the state by creating a reduction in the need or demand for other support or services.

In terms of qualitative primary research, **seven** project level case study visits were completed. This research involved a day visit to a project including interviews with older people, volunteers, project staff and partners. We also conducted **four** ethnographic research visits that had a focus on go along interviews and observations of older people. **Five** projects also submitted their own case studies, following a format provided by the evaluation team.

In addition, 10 older people<sup>10</sup>, who were involved in one of the Silver Dreams Fund projects either a beneficiary or volunteer, were provided with one day of community evaluator training, an accompanying manual and on-going support by telephone and email. The community evaluators undertook **15 interviews with older people** and recorded the interviews using the digital flip cameras which were provided<sup>11</sup>. Community evaluators also produced video diaries of their own experiences in the portfolio and of being a community evaluator.

This report also draws on information provided in 1,300 project blogs and approximately 12 articles which appeared in the Daily Mail (with more details provided in Chapter 7).

<sup>9</sup> For further details see: <http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/1467.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> 3 community evaluators did not conduct interviews due to health issues

<sup>11</sup> With the exception of one community evaluator who completed interviews by telephone

## 1.4 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report sets out findings relating to:

- Chapter 2 - Involvement of older people.
- Chapter 3 – Volunteering.
- Chapter 4 - Effectiveness of different models of intervention.
- Chapter 5 - Partnership working.
- Chapter 6 - Outcomes and impacts for older people and organisations.
- Chapter 7 – Dissemination.

Finally, in Chapter 8 we present conclusions and implications for future delivery.

Further analysis, including that relating to the project blogs and influencing work, is provided in annexes.

## 2.0 Involvement of older people

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the involvement of older people using the Wilcox Guide to Effective Participation (see Section 2.2 below). These findings are based on information recorded within the project proformas, case studies and self-evaluation reports. This chapter examines why the type of participation approach was chosen; how it worked in practice; what worked well, and lessons learned; as well as the benefits and impact of this approach.

In this chapter, involving older people is taken to relate to the involvement of older people who were beneficiaries. The findings on volunteering in Chapter 3 cover the participation of all volunteers including older people as volunteers. It was common for projects to involve older people as volunteers and often there was a crossover between involving older people in a variety of forms of participation and volunteering.

### 2.2 Ways of involving older people

Involvement can be defined and assessed using the Wilcox Guide to Effective Participation<sup>12</sup> (see Table 2.1 below). This ranges from projects that did not involve beneficiaries but only provided information to beneficiaries, through to projects helping beneficiaries to develop and carry out their initiatives.

**Table 2.1 Guide to Effective Participation**

Level	Type of participation	Explanation
5	Supporting independent community initiatives	Means helping others to develop and carry out their own plans; resource providers may put limits on these plans.
4	Acting together	May involve short term collaboration or the forming of more permanent partnerships
3	Deciding together	It can mean giving power to people to choose without sharing the responsibility for carrying decisions through; begs the question if everyone has equal influence
2	Consultation	Offering some choices about what is going to happen – but not to develop own ideas
1	Information	Underpins all other levels but offers no involvement – ‘take it or leave it’

*Source: Wilcox D; 1995; Guide to Effective Participation; York: Rowntree.*

The first level of the scale is information. This level is not strictly a type of participation and is defined as what ‘underpins all other levels but offers no involvement – ‘take it or leave it’. Based on the information provided by projects, it was clear that projects reached at least level 1 of participation scale, as defined above. This included providing information, events and leaflets, particularly in the early stages of project development and delivery.

<sup>12</sup> Wilcox D; 1995; Guide to Effective Participation; York: Rowntree

As noted in Chapter 1, **helping older people to help themselves** has been a key theme of the Silver Dreams Fund with an emphasis on projects enabling and empowering older people to find their own solutions by involving them in all aspects of designing, running and managing the project. Table 2.2 shows that Silver Dreams Fund projects have tended to focus on participation at levels 2 and 3.

**Table 2.2 Types of participation projects have undertaken**

Type of older person's participation	Number of Projects
5. Supporting independent community initiatives	3 working towards <sup>13</sup>
4. Acting together	10
3. Deciding together	30
2. Consultation	15
1. Information	33

*Source: project proformas /evaluation reports, base size = 33.*

The extent to which involving older people has been successful is explored below beginning with level 2 - consultation.

### 2.2.1 Consultation

The second level of participation is consultation. This can take many forms, however the focus of this section will draw on Wilcox's definition of consultation: 'Offering some choices about what is going to happen – but not to develop own ideas'.

The main type of formal consultation that the Silver Dreams Fund projects undertook was consultation events. This included consultation lunches or focus groups, as well as larger events. The purpose of the sessions tended to be on refining the delivery of activities to ensure they were meeting beneficiary needs. The frequency of these events varied from regular to occasional sessions. The other key approach taken was encouraging on-going informal feedback from beneficiaries throughout the project's delivery which projects felt was very effective in ensuring older people are able to feed in their views on a continual basis. Some projects felt providing beneficiaries with choice over how they took part in sessions was also evidence of older people's involvement however this does not fall within the definition of consultation being adopted here.

The consultations often took place alongside other forms of involving older people, particularly deciding together which is discussed in the next section. There was only one instance where older people did not have more involvement in how the project was designed and delivered. This is likely to be due to the fact that the older people had dementia and struggled to form their opinions.

<sup>13</sup> Showing signs of level 5 but have not completely fulfilled this

## 2.2.2 Deciding together

Wilcox's definition of 'deciding together' is about 'giving power to people to choose without sharing the responsibility for carrying decisions through'.

Many Silver Dreams Fund projects reached level 3 'deciding together'. A popular 'deciding together' model was involving older people, alongside volunteers, staff and other stakeholders in a steering group or project management board that oversaw the project from the design phase and through delivery. Projects fed back that this approach worked well and ensured that the project development involved older people's views. A key success of older people's involvement in steering groups or project management boards is ensuring that project staff had a good understanding of older people's needs.

For the **OPTiC** project, RNIB<sup>14</sup> appointed an older person from their target group as the chair of the project management steering group. This was done to maintain a focus on beneficiary outcomes and ensure that beneficiaries' views were at the heart of project management. The chair helped the steering group to understand the barriers around the use of stigmatizing language and also challenged misconceptions. In addition, this involvement helped ensure that the project management team adopted accessible practices that were inclusive to all. This led to the establishment of a Beneficiary Action Group which prioritised additional project work and was responsible for managing the funding allocation. Project staff felt this group had dual benefits for the project and the older people.

*"This has given a greater sense of ownership and those engaged with this element of the project have been great advocates."* OPTiC - RNIB<sup>15</sup>

A popular alternative to involving older people on steering groups was convening older person user groups at various points during delivery. Often user groups were formed at the design phase to ensure that older people's views informed the initial design of the project, including design of delivery tools and sessions, the user group was then reconvened at intervals throughout the project. Some user groups were open forums for older people to discuss any ideas they had about the project. Other user groups focused on particular topics such as redesigning the project's publicity materials.

Option Counselling's **Optamise**<sup>16</sup> facilitated a lunch time focus group which involved older people redesigning the project's publicity leaflets and booklets. Beneficiaries fed back that they felt this involvement was very valuable for them but also ensured that the leaflets and booklets were easy to understand for other older people<sup>17</sup>.

Projects felt that involving older people at the design phase, and then continuing this involvement throughout the project, worked particularly well as it increased older people's sense of ownership concerning the project. In addition it helped to raise older people's self esteem as they realised they were being listened to. In some cases, involving older people in this way led to the older people becoming ambassadors for the project in their local communities.

A key point for this level of participation as outlined by Wilcox is the extent to which '*everyone has equal influence*'. This can be interpreted as both the extent to which older people have equal influence compared to project staff and other stakeholders as well as the extent to which older people all have equal influence. In terms of the former, projects commented on the importance of older people leading on the decision making within the project and ensuring that older people influenced both the design and delivery of the project:

<sup>14</sup> RNIB's OPTiC (Older People Taking Control) Project Proforma

<sup>15</sup> OPTiC – RNIB Proforma

<sup>16</sup> Optamise - Options Wellbeing Trust Proforma

<sup>17</sup> Optamise - Options Wellbeing Trust case study visit



*"Placing older people at the centre of decision-making structures has simplified the management of the project. The steer has been clear and unequivocal."* Forwards Together Peer Support for Older People Experiencing Sight Loss - Derbyshire Association for the Blind<sup>18</sup>

However this approach was often very challenging to achieve in practical terms. Older people were sometimes unaware of the resource implications of some of the ideas that they raised<sup>19</sup>. In addition not all ideas that were put forward aligned with the ethos or purpose of the project. In some instances this led to older people feeling frustrated that their ideas had not been taken forward. To overcome this challenge, projects identified a need to clearly define the scope and remit of the group as well as clearly explain the reasons for not taking ideas forward. One project reported that they tried to acknowledge all ideas that were raised and then explained to older people why these ideas could or could not be taken forward.

### 2.2.3 Acting together

According to Wilcox, level 4, 'acting together' can involve 'short term collaboration or the forming of more permanent partnerships'. In the context of the Silver Dreams Fund projects this was interpreted as where older people were involved in taking ideas forward alongside project staff.

Of the projects that achieved this level of participation, one of the main approaches was to involve older people who were still participating in the project in leading the delivery of activities. This also occurred in projects where beneficiaries had become formal volunteers (and some examples of this situation are discussed in the following chapter). In cases where older people remained as beneficiaries, involvement tended to involve delivering sessions which drew upon existing skills held by the older people, such as gardening sessions. In other cases, older people took on the role of supporting other older people during sessions. Projects highlighted the amount of time and support that it took to reach the point when older people felt able to lead or co-lead a session. Projects also recognised that not all older people wanted to be involved in this way.

Another approach involved older people being supported to promote the project alongside project staff at events and potential venues as illustrated by the example below.

**Figure 2.1 Case Study: Acting together**<sup>20</sup>

#### **CASE STUDY: NORTHERN SHAPE: HENPOWER**

In one sheltered accommodation setting a particularly active group of older people established 'Hen-Power HQ' and frequently meet to discuss ideas for the project. The older people in **HenPower** HQ act as ambassadors for the project which has included attending conferences to promote the project, and are working to establish funding and business models to continue the project. When new care home settings express interest in the project older people go along with project staff to talk about the project, and in particular to tell other older people how the project has helped them.

### 2.2.4 Supporting independent community initiatives

Level 5 of the Wilcox participation model is 'supporting independent community initiatives' and is defined as 'helping others to develop and carry out their own plans; resource providers may put limits on these plans'. This is the level that many of the projects were striving towards in order to support the sustainability of their activities as well as to enable older people to fully own the project.

<sup>18</sup> Forwards Together Peer Support for Older People Experiencing Sight Loss - Derbyshire Association for the Blind Proforma

<sup>19</sup> Feedback from project learning event

<sup>20</sup> HenPower – Northern Shape Case study visit

Unsurprisingly, this is the most difficult level to achieve and several projects commented that this was particularly challenging to achieve within a period of 18 months due to the time needed to support older people to feel confident and equipped to take a lead on a project. However, a small number of projects appeared to be close to achieving this level of involvement. The commonality between these examples was that they all involved older people taking forward their own groups. The groups tended to have a social focus but also included running their own sessions separately from the main project.

*“The project has also empowered older people to set up their own groups leading to them sustain the course benefits and providing a resource to support others.” Active Plus<sup>21</sup>*

This appeared to be the easiest activity for older people to continue due to the low level of resource and responsibility entailed in running a social session. The more difficult activities for older people to lead and continue were those that required more training or additional skills, as well as those that were delivered on a larger scale. One project had taken steps towards this by upskilling older people to deliver training via train the trainer sessions.

## 2.3 Benefits of involving older people

Projects highlighted that involving older people in Silver Dreams Fund projects had benefits for both older people and the projects themselves.

An improvement in self esteem and confidence was a key benefit for older people who played an active role in a project. In some cases beneficiaries were pleasantly surprised that their views were heard, respected and fed into the design and delivery of the project.

*“Older adults were surprised that their views were important and that people listened and acted on their feedback. This involvement has had a real impact on their self-esteem.” Optamise - Options Wellbeing Trust<sup>22</sup>*

Being involved in how the project was shaped and delivered also led to beneficiaries having an increased sense of ownership of the project. This also meant that older people became natural ambassadors for the projects and helped to spread the word amongst their friends and neighbours.

*“The older men were the best advocates of the project and were able to get out and about to involve others.” The Countrymen’s Club - Future Roots<sup>23</sup>*

Involving older people in the development stage ensured that the service delivered was tailored to, and met beneficiaries’ needs closely as it was firmly based on based on older people’s insights.

*“Involving older people in both the design and implementation of the service has ensured that we provided targeted and appropriate services from the start of the project.” Health, Wealth and Happiness -Terence Higgins Trust<sup>24</sup>*

This benefited older people as it ensured the service fulfilled their needs and provided older people with confidence in the service.

*“Working with older people and volunteers as part of the strategy and oversight of the project has helped enormously. We have been able to get highly relevant perspectives and in some cases personal experiences that have helped shape service delivery and also provided challenges. This brings a considerable amount of*

<sup>21</sup> Active Plus Proforma

<sup>22</sup> Optamise - Options Wellbeing Trust Proforma

<sup>23</sup> The Countrymen’s Club - Future Roots Proforma

<sup>24</sup> Health, Wealth and Happiness -Terence Higgins Trust Proforma

*confidence to those planning to use or refer to the service as they feel there is real understanding from their peers of the issues and problems involved with a cancer diagnosis.” Advocacy on the Wards (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL<sup>25</sup>*

Similarly, the involvement of older people in every aspect of the project also provided project staff with the confidence that they were delivering services that were really needed by older people.

*“[Older people’s] input has had a huge influence in the language tone and content of our training and promotional materials and their on-going input has been essential in terms of continually ensuring we are meeting the needs of the wider community, for example, through the involvement of older people in the design of the roll-out of our project.” End of Life Rights Advocacy – Compassion in Dying<sup>26</sup>*

## 2.4 Challenges of involving older people

Projects faced a range of challenges when trying to effectively involve older people. The first challenge some projects faced was encouraging older people to be involved in different stages of the project<sup>27</sup>. Occasionally projects found that despite great efforts being made to involve older people in the different stages of the project some simply did not want to be involved. Projects found this difficult to align with the ethos of the project being ‘run for and by older people’.

Alongside the challenge of gaining the interest of older people, involving all older people equally was a test for projects<sup>28</sup>. Projects were particularly aware that some types of older people were more likely to put themselves forward to be involved than others and extra effort was required to encourage the more reluctant or less confident older people to be involved. For example, projects encountered difficulties in ensuring that the older people on their steering groups were properly representative. One approach to tackling this was to select peers or mentors that had experienced the same issues as beneficiaries however there was awareness that this still did not guarantee the peers/mentors would fully represent the views of the target beneficiaries. Some projects established ‘user groups’ to help ensure representativeness. A benefit of user groups was that larger numbers of older people could take part as they did not have the restricted capacity of steering groups.

Once beneficiaries were fully involved in the project, project staff sometimes found it difficult to feedback to older people when their suggestions were not in line with the project ethos or there was a lack of resources to fulfil the older people’s ideas<sup>29</sup>. This appeared to be particularly problematic in cases where older people believed that all of their suggestions should be implemented. There was a need for project staff to clearly manage the expectations of older people, for example, by clearly explaining the rationale behind their decisions.

Projects faced additional challenges in ensuring vulnerable groups of older people were involved. Involving older people with dementia in the development and delivery of the project was particularly difficult. Older people with dementia tended not to have an active role in developing the project but were given choices over what activities they participated in<sup>30</sup>. For example the Sunbeam Trust’s **Music in Dignity®** beneficiaries were encouraged to choose how they responded to the songs in the session and were also involved in performing songs during the Care Home concerts and ‘Big Gigs’ at the Civic Hall<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Advocacy on the Wards (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL Proforma

<sup>26</sup> End of Life Rights Advocacy – Compassion in Dying Proforma

<sup>27</sup> Project proformas

<sup>28</sup> Final learning event – involving older people’s workshop

<sup>29</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>30</sup> Ecorys case study visit

<sup>31</sup> Dignity in Music® - Sunbeam Trust Proforma

Enabling older people with physical disabilities to meet together presented logistical difficulties. SHINE overcame this by utilising social media as a communication tool as part of the **SHINE 50 Plus** project<sup>32</sup>.

Involving older people who spoke little English was testing for several projects working with BME communities. The projects had to ensure that sufficient interpreter support was available<sup>33</sup>. A bigger challenge was overcoming cultural differences. For instance, Winchester Area Community Action was aware that the Nepalese Elders had a tendency to want to please project staff and were reluctant to suggest any improvements or ideas for further development of the project<sup>34</sup>.

Even in cases where projects had overcome the above challenges and managed to involve older people there were sometimes difficulties in maintaining continued involvement for a variety of reasons, including illness, poor weather, and caring responsibilities.

Supporting beneficiaries to take a lead on design, development and delivery was an objective for many of the projects. However, projects found that making the transition from being involved in the project with the support of project staff to actually leading was daunting for some beneficiaries. Some projects found it helped to encourage a gentle transition to a leading role. In some cases this took a more formal process with support and training provided along the way.

*“There is a clear progression through the project for beneficiaries as they start with capabilities to be buddies and run peer groups. To progress to leading change exchange work beneficiaries need to be even more confident and may need some support with specific skills development.”* OPTiC - RNIB<sup>35</sup>

In other cases, projects adopted a more informal approach to this transition.

*“One example, is a client who joined our Men in Sheds session. He was quite reluctant at first as it was actually his wife who had encouraged him to join us. He was uneasy about having his photograph taken and did not want to appear on the blog or in an editorial run by our local newspaper. Over time, confidence grew and strong relationships were formed. Today, he now facilitates a number of Shed sessions, including our quite vocal, Ladies in Sheds group and is a very well-liked and respected member of our team. Our learning, is that this development takes time.”* Barrow Respectability - Age Concern Barrow<sup>36</sup>

## 2.5 Lessons learned

A number of lessons were learned in relation to the effective participation of older people across the different levels of the Wilcox scale.

- The importance of involving older people at an early stage. This enabled projects to ensure that older people were involved throughout the development and delivery of the project. For example, **Active Plus** began with feedback questionnaires before arranging group feedback sessions, but reflected that it would have been more effective to have held feedback sessions from the beginning.
- There is a need to take steps to ensure that all older people, particularly more vulnerable groups can be appropriately involved in different aspects of the design, development and delivery of a project. Time is needed to identify the particular barrier for a group and then identify a practical solution. For example one project, had older people with sight loss on the steering group. In order to enable an older person to fully take part in the meeting all documents for steering group meetings were sent out prior to the meeting to allow the older person with sight loss to read the documents with appropriate assistive

<sup>32</sup> SHINE50 Plus - SHINE Proforma

<sup>33</sup> Project proformas

<sup>34</sup> Elders Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action Proforma

<sup>35</sup> OPTiC - RNIB Proforma

<sup>36</sup> Barrow Respectability - Age Concern Barrow and District Proforma

technology. SHINE's **SHINE 50 Plus** project found it difficult for beneficiaries to meet together due to their physical disabilities. This was overcome by the project by utilising social media as a communication tool.

- Be aware that not all older people will want to be involved in the design and delivery of projects. Project fed back that some older people were offered the opportunity to be involved but preferred to just attend activities and allow project staff to design the sessions and set the agenda. This was challenging for projects to accommodate within a being 'run for and by older people ethos' however projects fed back that they offered the opportunity to be involved to all older people but had to accept not everyone wants to be involved.
- Support and train older people who may not have the confidence or skills to undertake certain roles, such as writing blogs or filming activities. Some projects worked with and trained older people to increase their confidence or develop specific skills. However in some cases projects did have to accept that older people were unable or did not want to undertake these specific roles. For instance one project trained older people to make films but the older people found this very difficult and the training was used to support staff in making films instead.
- Be flexible about how older people are involved and tailor the approach to the needs of the older people and other constraints. For example Rural Action Yorkshire's **Touchstones**<sup>37</sup> project had planned to establish an older person's reference group however this proved logistically difficult due to the geographical spread of beneficiaries. Instead Touchstones recruited older people in each area to help steer project activities which proved to be very effective.
- Be prepared for unforeseen circumstances preventing involvement. Projects found that there were a variety of reasons why older people would not be able to be fully involved in particular tasks such as illness, caring responsibilities and not able to travel to the venue. Projects could not overcome all of these barriers but being aware of the barriers meant they could plan for this. In some instance projects were able to support beneficiaries to enable them to participate, such as providing older people the opportunity to participate via telephone.
- Recognise that it can be challenging to make the transition from beneficiary to leading on design, development and delivery. Projects identified that they needed to be ready to invest time and encouragement to support beneficiaries to make this transition. This often included offering formal or informal mentoring. For instance **Barrow Respectability** fed back that one older person was very reluctant to even take part in the project but with gentle encouragement from project staff, the older person grew in confidence and went on to lead several Men, and Women, in Shed sessions<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Touchstones – Rural Action Yorkshire Proforma

<sup>38</sup> Barrow Respectability – Age UK Barrow Proforma

## 3.0 Volunteering

This chapter assesses the effectiveness of recruitment and involvement of volunteers in the Silver Dreams Fund projects as well as the benefits of this approach. Findings are based on information recorded within the project proformas, project case studies, project blogs, community evaluator interview write ups, event reports, and the end of grant reports to the Big Lottery Fund.

### 3.1 Approaches to volunteering

A wide variety of approaches to involving volunteers were described in the proformas, blogs and project case studies.

Often the strategies to recruit a type of volunteer appeared to be dictated by the preferences of beneficiaries. Some found it important to attract volunteers who shared the same characteristics as the beneficiaries. For instance **Come Dine With Us**, delivered by Age UK County Durham<sup>39</sup>, found that having an understanding of loneliness and isolation themselves enabled their volunteers to better support beneficiaries. Age UK North Tyneside's **Hospital to Home** initially intended to recruit volunteers who shared the characteristics or experiences of beneficiaries, however, it soon became apparent that in order for them to achieve the potential of the project, they had to accept a wider volunteer age range than first intended; with the youngest being 18 and the oldest 78 (and an average age of 50)<sup>40</sup>. Compassion in Dying's **End of Life Rights Advocacy** noted that because many of their volunteers were older people themselves they were better able to connect to the older people in thinking about the future and end of life<sup>41</sup>. Older volunteers were seen as positive role models and an inspiration to other older people.

For other projects it was important that volunteers had the required range of skills and experiences to support the project, whether they were older people themselves or not. For example, the Hampton Trust's **Planning for the Future** highlighted on their blog the importance of volunteers having enthusiasm for the project and also having a range of skills and experience from a variety of professions<sup>42</sup>. Similarly, the Helena Partnership's **Going Home** project highlighted that all their volunteers had an interest in improving older people's quality of life, and that most had worked in a related job before they volunteered, including community nursing, social care and working as a practice manager for a GP surgery. Feedback from the volunteers found that many of them did not particularly like the term '*volunteer*', which is why it was subsequently replaced with '*extended team member*'<sup>43</sup>.

Learning for 4<sup>th</sup> Age's **SPECS** project recruited a wide variety of volunteers and used them in separate areas depending on their skills and interests<sup>44</sup>. The **Bereavement Befriending and Advocacy Support Service** delivered by Volunteer Cornwall provided volunteer opportunities for students who needed to practice their counselling skills as part of their course<sup>45</sup>. In doing so they successfully engaged a large group of volunteers with a wide range of skills and backgrounds<sup>46</sup>.

Manor Farm Community Association's **Silver Scheme** worked with volunteers with a wide range of experiences regardless of age. They highlighted in their blogs that older people can be useful role models for younger people and their energy and enthusiasm had been a positive example to their younger volunteers.

<sup>39</sup> Come Dine With Us – Age Concern Durham Proforma

<sup>40</sup> Hospital to Home – Age UK North Tyneside Proforma

<sup>41</sup> End of Life Rights Advocacy – Compassion in Dying Proforma

<sup>42</sup> Planning for the Future – The Hampton Trust Blog

<sup>43</sup> Going Home – Helena Partnership blog

<sup>44</sup> SPECS – Learning for 4<sup>th</sup> Age blog

<sup>45</sup> BBASS – Volunteer Cornwall blog

<sup>46</sup> BBASS - Volunteer Cornwall End of grant Report

*"I really feel strongly that older people should not be overlooked and that they have plenty of skills and talents that can be put to good use."* Manor Farm Community Association Volunteer<sup>47</sup>

### 3.2 Recruitment methods

Local and national media were commonly used to advertise volunteering positions for many projects. Frequently advertisements were placed, for example, on local radio stations and in the local press, but there was also some evidence of more creative use of local media. One of those being the **In Good Hands** support project for Deafblind people<sup>48</sup> which had recruited a volunteer who was also a broadcaster on a local community radio station. This link provided an opportunity for a wider discussion around age-related deaf blindness; which not only raised awareness of the issue but highlighted the volunteering opportunities available and the training that would be offered. Furthermore, the project concluded that their work was so unique that it attracted people who had become less interested in existing volunteering opportunities, as well as older people who had never volunteered before but found the subject matter and the benefits of a personal awareness of the effects of deafblindness so interesting and rewarding that they decided to get involved<sup>49</sup>. However, some other projects experienced the opposite problem and found that it difficult to recruit volunteers due to the many competing opportunities available. In general, many found it challenging to not demand too much of the volunteers, not the least as many were volunteering for more than one organisation.

Articles were written about some projects in national publications, for example the Older Peoples' Advocacy Alliance's **Advocacy on the Wards** (renamed as COPA) project featured in an article within 'AGENDA', the newsletter of the English Forums on Ageing<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless, despite this publicity and their wider efforts the project noted that they suffered from a lack of referrals, particularly from healthcare professionals and specialist hospital centres. Consequently, they experienced difficulties in retaining volunteers and advocates. As some staff and volunteers were recruited because of their personal experience of cancer it inevitably meant that some suffered periods of ill-health, which sometimes caused them to withdraw from the project<sup>51</sup>.

Advertisements in the media were not always successful. Some organisations highlighted that this method had not always generated interest, particularly amongst older age groups. In these circumstances a number of alternative methods had been explored, which ranged from informally gaining ideas and feedback from existing volunteers, to broadening the pool of volunteers through contact with different organisations, such as other community groups. A number used community events to generate interest in volunteering opportunities at their projects. Care & Repair found that many previous users were keen on sharing their experiences with others; a large proportion of their volunteers were therefore engaged through contacting current or past service users<sup>52</sup>. The Hampton Trust's **Planning for the Future** project tried to focus recruitment at sporting or hobby activities such as golf or bowling in order to target older volunteers. However, they noted that their approach (which involved starting up the project and recruiting volunteers at the same time) proved to be more ambitious and time consuming than expected and if given the opportunity to do this again they would aim to generate a steady stream of referrals over the course of at least a year, and then recruit volunteers in order to involve them from the start<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> The Silver Scheme - Manor Farm Community Association Blog

<sup>48</sup> Northumberland 'In Good Hands' Deafblind Support – Scene Enterprise Blog

<sup>49</sup> Northumberland 'In Good Hands' Deafblind Support – Scene Enterprise Proforma

<sup>50</sup> COPA - OPAAL Blog

<sup>51</sup> COPA - OPAAL Proforma

<sup>52</sup> Silverlinks Project Proforma

<sup>53</sup> Planning for the Future Project Proforma

Some organisations highlighted how they had changed their approach to volunteering to make the process more informal and flexible. As part of the **Barrow Respectability** project, Age UK Barrow and District developed introductory/taster sessions for potential volunteers who had expressed an interest, these worked well as a way to introduce the project and to identify training and support needs prior to taking up the role<sup>54</sup>. Grandparents Plus's **Relative Experience** held informal coffee mornings for beneficiaries who were interested in volunteering, and found this effective as it provided a friendly and comfortable environment for potential volunteers<sup>55</sup>.

Some organisations tapped into their own existing pools of volunteers, used existing partner networks, or developed new partnerships within the Silver Dreams Fund programme. One example was in Cornwall where Active Plus and Volunteer Cornwall decided to work together<sup>56</sup>. As part of Silver Dreams Fund, Active Plus delivered training courses to older members of the community which aimed to encourage and support the group to become involved in volunteering within the local community, participate in other activities or to continue meeting as a group to provide support and friendship to each other. Part of the partnership arrangement was that co-ordinators from the Volunteer Cornwall's BBASS project attended sessions to offer groups the opportunity to put their improved communication skills and social interaction to good use by volunteering as befrienders or advocates. As noted above, Volunteer Cornwall also developed links with a local college to provide volunteering opportunities for students who were working towards NCFE, Advanced Certificate or Diplomas in Counselling Skills. These students were either required to complete a number of hours of skills practice to complete their qualification, or encouraged to gain experience relevant to their learning<sup>57</sup>.

Other projects used partnerships to engage front line staff to explain their project's needs and tap into potential volunteers. One of them was Hospitals to Home<sup>58</sup> which developed links within the Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust to recruit older volunteers with hospital experience. The partnership proved to be challenging and a learning process for both organisations, although it is hoped that it will have paved the way for more third sector involvement in supporting and improving older people's wellbeing in the area. Another example is the Options Wellbeing Trust which held a presentation about their project to around 40 members of staff from Southampton City Council's Sheltered Housing team which enabled them to highlight the range of volunteering opportunities within their project and to reach older adults who otherwise were unlikely to have accessed the project.

A number of organisations described how they amended their application procedure to ensure that they best encouraged potential volunteers. The Options Wellbeing Trust's **Optamise** project,<sup>59</sup> for example, worked hard to agree the criteria and design the application forms and then work out the type of interview questions. The main focus was on making the applicants feel as welcome and relaxed as possible. This included giving thought to seating arrangements, refreshments, introductions and the order in which questions were asked.

The skills and knowledge that were required from B:rap's **Heart to Heart** voluntary peer supporters were established through focus groups with volunteers<sup>60</sup>. The focus groups and subsequent training was reported to have worked very well, although there were some challenges such as the amount of administrative time required to coordinate the volunteers, as many also volunteered at other places as well, or were often busy with family matters, such as being a grandparent<sup>61</sup>. The **In Good Hands** project consulted with volunteers soon after recruitment and used their views to help improve their processes<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Barrow RespectAbility Project Proforma

<sup>55</sup> Relative Experience North East Project Pilot Project Proforma

<sup>56</sup> BBASS Blog

<sup>57</sup> BBASS Blog

<sup>58</sup> Hospitals to Home Blog

<sup>59</sup> Optimise – Options Wellbeing Trust Blog

<sup>60</sup> Heart to Heart – B:rap Blog

<sup>61</sup> Heart to Heart – B:rap Proforma

<sup>62</sup> In Good Hands – Scene Enterprise Proforma



Difficulties in recruitment of volunteers were also experienced by Eccleshill Community and Youth Association's **Men@Eccy Meccy** project and this highlighted the need for them to approach volunteering differently in order not to scare or intimidate potential candidates. In some cases, existing beneficiaries became informal volunteers as their confidence grew although this was a process that could sometimes take up to two months. Previously the role of a volunteer had been presented as structured and organised, but the beneficiaries had not felt confident enough to fulfil this role but by presenting it as a more informal role this encouraged them to develop skills that they did not realise they had<sup>63</sup>.

A few projects highlighted that bureaucracy (including CRB forms and application forms), and subsequently the high level of expectation to fulfil the monitoring requirements of the Silver Dreams Fund contract, had hampered the volunteer recruitment processes, as some potential candidates were put off by these processes. A couple of projects also noticed that the usage of the words 'older' or 'elderly' could be perceived as a form of insult and, as a result, the recruitment process benefited from leaving these words out.

### 3.3 Roles of volunteers

Volunteers were involved in the projects in a variety of ways. There were examples of volunteers playing important roles across the full spectrum of project provision, whether this was involvement in project design, management, delivery, or evaluation. In many cases volunteers were involved in more than one area of the project. Strategies included setting up steering groups, focus groups and reference groups with older people to provide feedback and insights throughout the project. Other modes of feedback mentioned were questionnaires, discussions and specific feedback sessions.

The **Barrow RespectAbility** project involved volunteers in the initial stages of, and throughout, the project as they were given the opportunity to share their ideas and views at the outset and these consultations helped to shape the delivery model and project design<sup>64</sup>. Our Celebration's **Silver Solutions** project involved volunteers in planning meetings, not only did this help to focus meetings on issues experienced by the beneficiaries, the involvement of volunteers was found to be really useful in terms of developing practical solutions to delivery problems. The project also organised social events to enable volunteers to engage and socialise together<sup>65</sup>. B:rap's **Heart to Heart** project involved volunteers in staff training sessions which provided an opportunity for volunteers to share their own knowledge and experience (for example, some were cardiac health professionals with knowledge of current healthcare practice), and also supported volunteers' understanding of the project aims and objectives. Three volunteers were subsequently involved in delivering the training to other volunteers<sup>66</sup>.

The project proformas provided some examples of volunteers being involved in project management. For example, Scene Enterprises' '**In Good Hands**' project ensured that they made good use of the wide range of skills possessed by their volunteers to assist the on-going development, management and sustainability of the project, for example, older volunteers became members of the project board<sup>67</sup>. The **Neighbourhood Return** project involved a volunteer on the project board to assist with development of the volunteer recruitment strategy<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Men@EccyMeccy – Eccleshill Community and Youth Association Proforma

<sup>64</sup> Both Barrow Respectability – Age UK Barrow and Silver Solutions - Our Celebration Proformas

<sup>65</sup> Silver Solutions Project Proforma

<sup>66</sup> Heart to Heart Blog

<sup>67</sup> 'In Good Hands' – Scene Enterprise Proforma

<sup>68</sup> Neighbourhood Return - Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network Proforma

Most projects highlighted examples of volunteers being involved in project delivery. For example **Come Dine with Me** involved volunteers hosting events and ensuring beneficiaries felt welcome and comfortable<sup>69</sup>. Both **Elders Crafts & English Exchange** and **Time of My Life** found that volunteer-led groups were an effective model to aid engagement. The former also involved volunteers and older people in their Wider Reference Group which discussed ways in which the project could best deliver the three target outcomes<sup>70</sup>. The Abbey Community Centre's **Community TIME Camden** had an on-going evaluation framework as part of the day to day processes in running the project and co-production approach. Volunteers ran events, workshops and helped direct and modify and approaches. For instance volunteers were speaking to beneficiaries on a one to one basis to address any confusion among beneficiaries who already used the facilities for other provision, and to explain the project's aims<sup>71</sup>.

The **Community TIME Camden** project was far from alone in involving volunteers in the evaluation at an early stage. Examination of project proformas and blogs revealed that a number of projects had involved volunteers in their evaluation, either by volunteers feeding back their experiences, or through volunteer-led evaluations of beneficiary experiences. For example, the **Plymouth SeniorNet** project delivered by **Routeways** delivered introductory training sessions for volunteers which were also used as an opportunity to collect early feedback and evaluate the training approach<sup>72</sup>. York Mind arranged meetings with a sample of volunteers to share their experiences and help develop the project and its website<sup>73</sup>.

### 3.4 Benefits of volunteering

Projects reported that there were a number of benefits of volunteering for the volunteers. Overwhelmingly the volunteers consulted fed back that the main benefit of volunteering for them was witnessing the difference that their volunteering role made to the beneficiaries they supported. This often related to their reasons for deciding to become a volunteer in the first place.

*"I enjoy helping people and being there for people"* Living Well Champion (Volunteer)<sup>74</sup>

For volunteers that did benefit personally from their volunteer role, a key benefit identified was an improvement in volunteers' confidence. This was considered to be a result of both the training they received as well as through supporting older people.

*"One of the unexpected outcomes was for volunteer befrienders themselves, many of whom grew in confidence as result of completing their training and providing support to kinship carers."* Relative Experience – Grandparents Plus<sup>75</sup>

A small number of projects asked volunteers to complete a survey which included the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale as a measure of mental wellbeing<sup>76</sup>. This illustrated that Silver Dreams Fund projects had a positive effect on volunteers' mental wellbeing. For participating projects overall<sup>77</sup>, there was a statistically significant increase in mental wellbeing of 2.74 points. At a project level, the greatest increases were recorded by Our Celebration's **Silver Solutions** and Scene Enterprises' **In Good Hands** (8.87 and 3.54 respectively).

<sup>69</sup> Come Dine with Me Blog

<sup>70</sup> Elders Crafts & English Exchange and Time of My Life Project Proformas

<sup>71</sup> Community TIME Camden Project Proformas

<sup>72</sup> Plymouth SeniorNet Project Proforma

<sup>73</sup> Our Celebration Blog and Proforma

<sup>74</sup> Altogether Better – Sheffield Wellbeing Trust Case study

<sup>75</sup> Relative Experience – Grandparents Plus Proforma

<sup>76</sup> This scale comprises seven items and produces a range of scores from 7-45, with higher scores indicating greater mental wellbeing.

<sup>77</sup> This relates to seven projects that had returned surveys from the start and end of participants engagement with Silver Dreams Fund

**Table 3.1 Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale**

Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
Total		29.07	52	0.001
Forwards Together - Derbyshire Association for the Blind	26.28	27.80	5	0.772
Silver Knowledge - Derwent Homes Ltd	28.20	25.85	7	0.441
Silver Scheme - Manor Farm CA	27.57	30.25	8	0.634
In Good Hands - Scene Enterprises Ltd	29.87	30.41	24	0.003
Silver Solutions - Our Celebration	26.87	27.50	8	0.003
* Related t-test is significant at 5% if $p < 0.05$				

Source: Ecorys Volunteer Survey data, n=52

The results of the survey showed a minimal effect on volunteers' rating of their general life satisfaction with the exception of Manor Farm's **Silver Scheme** and Our Celebration's **Silver Solutions** projects which showed statistically significant increases of 1.2 points and 3.13 points respectively. This may indicate that these projects recruited volunteers who had more scope to benefit from providing support to beneficiaries.

**Table 3.2 Satisfaction with life as a whole nowadays**

Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
Total	7.59	8.30	52	0.023
Forwards Together - Derbyshire Association for the Blind	8.00	7.80	5	0.749
Silver Knowledge - Derwent Homes Ltd	8.14	7.28	7	0.370
Silver Scheme - Manor Farm CA	7.75	8.87	8	0.026
In Good Hands - Scene Enterprises	8.12	8.54	24	0.096
Silver Solutions - Our Celebration	5.13	8.25	8	0.043
* Related t-test is significant at 5% if $p < 0.05$				

Source: Ecorys Volunteer Survey data, n=52

Volunteer feedback from other projects demonstrated a greater effect on older volunteers' life satisfaction, particularly in cases where volunteers were also older people with additional needs as the case study below illustrates.

**Figure 3.1 Case Study: Benefits from volunteering**<sup>78</sup>

#### CASE STUDY: MUSIC FOR DIGNITY® - SUNBEAMS TRUST

One of the Music for Dignity® volunteers (known as Silver Liners) became involved with the project through attending a local day centre. As a member of the Silver Liners music group she was involved in choosing all the music that they play which included discussing this with the Residential Day Centres where they performed.

Being a Silver Liner had a profound effect on her as it had transformed her confidence and giving her life a structure and purpose. As the Silver Liner explained:

*"Music has made such a difference for me...It makes me feel that I've got something to aim for and to*

<sup>78</sup> Music for Dignity– Sunbeams Trust case study visit

## CASE STUDY: MUSIC FOR DIGNITY® - SUNBREAMS TRUST

*look forward to.”*

She also gained a sense of satisfaction from knowing she is helping the older people in the care homes where they perform.

*“When you first come they just sit there and don’t do much, but by the end of the concert you can see the smiles on their faces.”*

### 3.5 Effective practice

A few projects adopted a buddy system for their volunteers to assist in meeting their on-going support needs. For example, **Active Plus** recognised the need for extra support and mentoring to ensure that volunteers from vulnerable groups were able to contribute fully. To help facilitate this process, volunteers were paired with an older person at the initial recruitment stage and this continued throughout their involvement in the project which was felt to support sustainability. They reported that the creation of friendships and provision of peer support has been extremely effective. Furthermore, it resulted in many beneficiaries progressing to providing help in the community so they had someone to go with and they provided each other with support<sup>79</sup>. On a similar note, the Terrence Higgins Trust noted that their biggest challenge with their Health, Wealth and Happiness project volunteers was their lack of self confidence in their ability to support others. They attempted to mitigate this by providing higher levels of support, through frequent one-to-one meetings, regular emails and phone calls, and also planned to buddy more experienced volunteers with newer ones. Overall, the project was very successful in engaging older volunteers (116 against a target of 50)<sup>80</sup>.

After losing their first couple of volunteers, Age UK North Tyneside’s **Hospital to Home** project realised that there was a need to help volunteers to form their own support teams on the ward and to hold peer support meetings on a regular basis<sup>81</sup>. Similarly, Scope’s **Our Generation**<sup>82</sup> project has supported volunteers to operate a buddy system to ensure support needs were met.

OPAAL’s **Advocacy on the Wards** (now known as COPA), and Age UK North Tyneside’s **Hospital to Home** simplified their volunteer processes during the project lifetime, particularly to reduce or simplify the use of IT for data collection to help remove the barriers that some volunteers were experiencing in undertaking their role<sup>83</sup>. Conversely, SHINE’s **Shine 50Plus** increased the use of technology as they adopted the use of Facebook and Skype as a working space for core volunteers.

The success of the Hampton Trust’s **Planning for the Future** project was felt to hinge on keeping volunteers engaged and feeling valued, so the project introduced regular meetings with volunteers to provide updates on progress and link them directly to each other<sup>84</sup>. Similarly, OPAAL’s recruited and trained volunteers for the **Advocacy on the Wards** (now known as COPA) project in anticipation of an immediate need; however, when referrals were slow to emerge, the project kept volunteers engaged through an information bulletin, meetings, training events, and visits to similar organisations. This helped to maintain a good retention rate for volunteers, and it was hoped that it would also help to build positive long term relationships<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> Active Plus Project Proforma

<sup>80</sup> Health Wealth and Happiness – Terence Higgins Trust Proforma

<sup>81</sup> Home from Hospital – Age UK North Tyneside Proforma

<sup>82</sup> Our Generation - Scope Proforma

<sup>83</sup> Advocacy on the Wards (COPA) - OPAAL and Hospital to Home - Age UK North Tyneside Proformas

<sup>84</sup> Planning for the Future – The Hampton Trust Blog

<sup>85</sup> Planning for the Future – The Hampton Trust Blog

### 3.6 Lessons learned

This section sets out lessons for effective volunteering based on the experiences reported by the Silver Dreams Fund projects.

- Consider carefully the profile of the volunteers to ensure they fit the needs of the project. For example OPAAL's **Advocacy on the Wards** project found that it was important for their project that the peer advocate could relate to the older person and understand beneficiaries' needs. This was achieved by using a matching process which included matching on shared characteristics. However, volunteers that have specific skills or experience might be preferred if this is required to fulfil the volunteering role. For example, one Silver Dreams Fund project specifically recruited volunteers with counselling skills as this was a key aspect of the support they were providing.
- Consider how to make the best use of local media when advertising volunteering positions. For instance one of Scene Enterprise's **In Good Hands** project<sup>86</sup>'s volunteers was also a broadcaster for a local community radio station. This provided an opportunity to discuss the project on air and particularly highlight the volunteering opportunities available which worked well.
- Ensure that promotion of volunteer positions is tailored to the type of volunteers you are trying to attract. For instance Options Wellbeing Trust's **Optimise** project wanted to engage older volunteers and quickly realised that posting adverts on websites such as Gumtree attracted a younger prospective volunteer. The project overcame this by changing the advertising approach and advertised local newspapers and magazine<sup>87</sup>. Similarly Age UK North Tyneside's **Hospital to Home** project found that the national volunteer website, [www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org), attracted younger volunteers and placing volunteer posters in supermarkets near to the hospitals led to a much higher level of interest from older volunteers.
- Consider how older people are described in the recruitment process. A few projects highlighted that some potential candidates were put off by the usage of terms such as 'older' and 'elderly' in the recruitment materials. One project was very careful to leave out references to these words which they found worked well.
- Be flexible in the approach to recruitment. Projects fed back that there was a need to be prepared to try a different recruitment method if the first option was not as successful as they hoped. For example one Silver Dreams Fund project started by producing leaflets and adverts for their volunteer posts, however this did not lead to much interest in the roles so was not effective so they tried holding community events which were far more effective at engaging volunteers.
- Ensure that the application information and process is designed to encourage the most suitable volunteers to apply. For instance some Silver Dreams Fund projects worked hard to ensure their recruitment processes were welcoming and that the volunteer criteria were well defined.
- Consider carefully what roles volunteers can be expected to play. As well as supporting beneficiaries this could include involvement in project management, delivery and evaluation. For instance one Silver Dreams Fund project involved volunteers in designing and delivering training to other volunteers which was felt to give the training more credibility.

<sup>86</sup> Northumberland 'In Good Hands' Deafblind Support – Scene Enterprise Blog

<sup>87</sup> Case study visit

- Extra support might be needed for volunteers that are new to volunteering or who have low confidence. One effective approach used by a Silver Dreams Fund project was providing an array of support such as frequent one-to-one meetings, regular emails and phone calls, and more experienced volunteers to buddy the new volunteers.
- If there are gaps in volunteers' involvement in the project, consider different ways of keeping volunteers engaged in the project. For instance there were unforeseen delays in peer advocates being matched to older people in OPAAL's **Advocacy on the Wards** project following the advocates training. To avoid volunteers losing interest, OPAAL provided a range of activities such as training events, visits to hospices and involving the volunteers in publicity and recruitment tasks<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> Advocacy on the Wards – OPAAL Proforma

## 4.0 Models of intervention

This chapter explores the models of intervention implemented by Silver Dreams Fund projects. It first reviews the different types of models including their strengths and weaknesses, then explores the extent to which different models can be scaled up or replicated using the Nesta 'Scaling Up' scale<sup>89</sup>.

### 4.1 Review of different models of intervention

Silver Dreams Fund projects were all focussed on supporting older people towards smooth life transitions. However, projects varied greatly in the groups of older people they targeted and the types of activities they delivered, which indicates a wide variety of approaches and models of delivery. All of the project models the evaluation has identified included some form of involvement of older people in design, delivery and evaluation, as well as volunteering and partnership working, either to support referrals or delivery. All of these aspects are explored in earlier chapters.

Based on the evidence collected, four broad models of intervention have been identified:

- Peer befriending/advocacy - focused on health, education or social benefits.
- Older people supporting each other - through skills and/or experience sharing.
- Volunteer-led or peer-led delivery of activities.
- Activities that bridge the gaps between services.

Silver Dreams Fund projects tended to be centred upon one of the above project models but often also contained elements of one or more of the other model types. Each of the identified models of intervention is explored below.

#### 4.1.1 Peer befriending or advocacy

**Peer befriending or advocacy** has been a common model of intervention for Silver Dreams Fund projects. The model was adopted by a range of projects but was particularly popular with both health and education focused interventions. For some projects this was the sole focus and for others this was one aspect of their work. For all peer befriending or advocacy interventions, peer befrienders or advocates received some form of training and tended to be viewed as volunteers rather than beneficiaries.

For health focused projects this model tended to be viewed as a sensitive and appropriate way of providing support to older people with particular health conditions as it enabled older people with similar health conditions to provide empathy and share their experiences with beneficiaries. This appeared to be effective as beneficiaries highlighted the importance of having a peer befriender or advocate that understood their experiences.

*"She told me she had had breast cancer. That made me think that I was talking to someone who understood how I may be feeling."* Advocacy on the Wards – OPAAL beneficiary<sup>90</sup>

A key aspect of this model was the process for matching a peer befriender to an older person as it was important to ensure the match was successful. Projects took different approaches to the matching process but usually aimed to ensure that the peer befriender and older person had something in common.

<sup>89</sup> Nesta and Nuffield Trust, Evidence for ageing well at home: Bringing together social investors with evidence leaders

<sup>90</sup> Advocacy on the Wards – OPAAL Proforma

Projects also found that this model was effective in empowering peer befrienders and advocates as well as enabling them to empower the older people they were supporting.

*“The project has enabled older people to consider options for themselves; to talk their choices through with a peer who will give them the time and space to think things through thoroughly, share ideas and worries, get contact information and be confident there will be someone to talk to each step of the way.”* Silver Knowledge - Derwentside<sup>91</sup>

Peer befriending or advocacy also provided the flexibility to work at the pace that the older person found comfortable. For instance, peer befrienders or advocates were able to re-explain anything an older person did not understand or visit more frequently than initially agreed.

Telephone and online befriending was a particularly effective approach to the peer befriending model as they are a way to overcome travel barriers which have been a challenge for beneficiaries with disabilities or long term health conditions. It also encouraged volunteer befrienders to take part as it involves less of a time commitment.

However a key success factor across different types of peer befriending or advocacy support was engaging high quality peer befrienders or advocates that are committed, enthusiastic and listen to the training provided.

*“The peer support has been successful. The high quality of the volunteers has been key to this. Their enthusiasm to reach out and help others who are facing life transitions has underpinned the success of the approach.”* Silverlinks - Care and Repair<sup>92</sup>

*“The project has helped improve transitions for older people in several ways, but predominantly the success has been based around the presence of committed volunteers who are there to provide a range of support during a specific transition.”* Silver Solutions - Our Celebration<sup>93</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Older people supporting each other

Developing a structure to **enable beneficiaries to support each other** was a popular model adopted by Silver Dreams Fund projects. There were two main approaches to this model, one involved some sort of mutually beneficial support group where beneficiaries could share their experience and support each other, and the other was a skills exchange where older people share practical skills with each other. The key difference between this model and the peer befriending model discussed above is that all group members were active beneficiaries.

A key success of this model was the fact that the project remained relevant to the beneficiaries as it was tailored to their needs.

*“We asked the participants at the groups what they would like to learn about or do, ensuring the activity/discussion meets their needs. This puts the participants in control of what they achieved, with our guidance and support and continued their transition through the programme.”* Forwards Together Peer Support for Older People Experiencing Sight Loss - Derbyshire Association for the Blind<sup>94</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Silver Knowledge - Derwentside Proforma

<sup>92</sup> Silverlinks - Care and Repair Proforma

<sup>93</sup> Silver Solutions - Our Celebration Proforma

<sup>94</sup> Forwards Together Peer Support for Older People Experiencing Sight Loss - Derbyshire Association for the Blind Proforma



This approach also helped to empower older people to help themselves, as well as others. A success factor of this model was providing a welcoming and supportive atmosphere at the projects.

*“The success factors have been the emphasis on exchange. Sharing craft skills, language, cultural stories, songs, dance, traditions, manners, etiquette and friendship. With the right venue, location, atmosphere and the open-minded attitude of the older volunteers that were recruited to engage the beneficiaries, the project delivery was based around informal groups housed in unthreatening environments to bring people together who wouldn’t otherwise have met.”* Elders Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action (WACA)<sup>95</sup>

Sharing practical skills between beneficiaries has worked well in certain settings where staff have supported and encouraged beneficiaries to identify skills that can be shared with other older people.

*“We have helped people to identify skills and experience that they can share with others as part of the project and this in itself has led to raised self-esteem and the feeling that they can be a real asset to their local community.”* Community TIME Camden – The Abbey Community Centre<sup>96</sup>

This could also mean providing an appropriate way to communicate. For SHINE’s **Shine50Plus project** the use of a Facebook group page was very effective to allow beneficiaries to have social chats but also for more structured discussions, such as their monthly ‘health talks’.

Although the emphasis was on older people exchanging skills and experience, projects tended to realise that there was a need for a facilitator or supporter initially<sup>97</sup>. However, projects often underestimated the level of ongoing support that beneficiaries actually required. In some cases this was due to the low self confidence of beneficiaries which meant that older people needed more hand holding than expected.

*“Overall the learning that can be taken away from this project is that the beneficiaries are a vulnerable and hard to reach group who need more than light touch intervention. ...Support at this level of intensity took time and the 18 month project duration proved to be a challenge to meet our targets.”* Project staff<sup>98</sup>

In other cases it was due to beneficiaries needing more training or encouragement to use the IT equipment needed to access online groups or activities. In cases where this was not possible within the constraints of the project the online activities stalled and were not pursued further as part of the pilot.

There were also challenges faced in setting up a more formal credit-based exchange service for older people to support each other. One key challenge was the time needed to set up a system and engage the interest of older people. Another challenge was setting up the IT system needed to deliver a credit-based exchange system quickly enough to maintain the interest of older people in the system.

#### 4.1.3 Volunteer-led project models

A **volunteer-led** model was implemented by a range of the Silver Dreams Fund projects. Here volunteers delivered a range of practical skills-based sessions, such as fire safety, craft activities, tai chi and walking classes, rather than paid staff. This model involved volunteers of all ages, not just older volunteers. Projects that took this approach tended to focus on engaging a particular group of older people that cannot usually access these activities, for instance rurally isolated older people, older people affected by alcohol abuse or older people with dementia.

<sup>95</sup> Elders Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action (WACA) Proforma

<sup>96</sup> Community TIME Camden – The Abbey Community Centre Proforma

<sup>97</sup> Project Proformas

<sup>98</sup> Project Proforma

Having a network of skilled volunteers to deliver practical sessions that interested beneficiaries worked well. Older people found that volunteers were easy to relate to and did not take a teacher approach which was very appealing to beneficiaries. The fact that older people related to the volunteers and appreciated the learning style was felt to lead to a high level of retention.

*“Successful delivery of the project has been overwhelmingly down to delivery by injured military veterans who empathise and inspire older people, making them come back for more and encouraging them to be mutually supportive.”* Active Plus project staff<sup>99</sup>

*“Our project staff are facilitators, encouraging participation and self-development rather than installing a rigid classroom environment. This has worked well with the clients, as many lack confidence issues and have concerns they will not “fit in” or be “good enough”. By nurturing an informal atmosphere, our members take ownership of their own learning, progress at their own speed and learn from each other.”* Barrow RespectAbility – Age Concern Barrow and District<sup>100</sup>

In order for a volunteer-led approach to work effectively, projects needed to ensure appropriate structures and support were in place and time was taken to ensure that volunteers were happy and confident in performing their role. In some cases this included a volunteer coordinator post to provide additional support (see Chapter 3 for further details).

*“We found that many older people wishing to volunteer needed extra support around confidence building in order to feel able to support other older people in a mentoring capacity. This was done through targeted training and on-going support by the Project Coordinator.”* Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust<sup>101</sup>

One project set up a volunteer comments log in order to collect and monitor feedback on an on-going basis and ensure that project staff responded to any suggestions raised. It was also important to be aware that the level of training required to lead different activities could vary. For instance, one project underestimated the time needed to recruit, train and support volunteers to become tele-friendship group facilitators which meant that this was not achieved within the lifespan of the project. Projects also reflected that it was important to carefully consider the suitability of volunteers that were leading different activities.

*“The flexibility of the scheme allowed volunteers to only do tasks they were comfortable in doing. This eased any stress on both sides of the volunteering relationship.”* Care4Care - Young Foundation<sup>102</sup>

For some projects, the ethos of the project was to encourage beneficiaries to become volunteers over the course of the project. This approach needed careful managing to ensure that beneficiaries were ready to become volunteers and there was a smooth transition from beneficiary to volunteer.

*“We take a well-considered and carefully thought through decision of when to approach that man and ask him if he would like to give back into the project through one of our volunteering opportunities. If asked at the right time many men smoothly go through a transition of taking up responsibility as a volunteer and are willing to do so. This could be 2 months or so into the project before we ask them if they want to get involved. It works well to encourage the men to think about what skills they have and how they can bring them into the project.”* Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community Association<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Active Plus Project Proforma

<sup>100</sup> Barrow RespectAbility – Age Concern Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>101</sup> Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust Proforma

<sup>102</sup> Care4Care - Young Foundation Proforma

<sup>103</sup> The Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community Association Proforma

Due to the challenge of recruiting and retaining volunteers as well as supporting beneficiaries to become volunteers this led to a few projects having to scale down the geographical coverage. In other cases, paid project staff sometimes led more activities than they expected to. This was particularly the case where projects encouraged beneficiaries to lead activities towards the end of projects as an add-on rather than embedding this approach from the start of the project.

*“There was not enough help and support to actively facilitate on-going activity once courses ended. Whilst many groups continued to meet and have been self-supporting, others struggled to get off the ground and/or maintain momentum. A more structured approach and increased resources to post-course activity would have helped this”* Active Plus<sup>104</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Activities that bridge the gap between services

The final intervention model was where a **gap in service provision** was identified and the project provided activities or signposting advice to bridge this gap. These projects tended to cover the health, social care, housing and policing sectors. The focus of these activities tended to be both on ensuring older people have the support they require but also to help reduce the costs to the state that result when older peoples' needs are not met quickly and adequately. In general terms, the projects delivering this intervention model tended to be most mindful of government policy and the potential impacts of their projects at a national level.

Projects implementing a project to bridge a gap in service provision tended to find that service providers saw the value of the project and how it would support service delivery almost immediately which suggested the projects had correctly identified the need for their intervention.

*“The project concept has been very well received indeed. This positive approach has helped us to spread information about the scheme, and other voluntary organisations have been particularly helpful in disseminating information about it.”* Neighbourhood Return – Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network<sup>105</sup>

Projects that had obvious benefits for both older people and services also found this helped to open the doors to working alongside other services.

*“Age UK North Tyneside’s mission to improve the lives of older people has been achieved in this project from both patient and volunteer perspective. The mealtime and wellbeing volunteers have provided older people in hospitals with the extra support they needed. At this lonely, frightening and often confusing transitional phase in their lives. NHS ward staffing levels do not allow for the extra time that makes such a difference to older patient’s wellbeing and nutrition. Plus vulnerable patients have been given a voice thanks to the observation volunteers to facilitate NHFT [Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust] improvements in care of the elderly via their Shared Purpose project.”* Hospital to Home Volunteering Support Scheme - Age UK North Tyneside<sup>106</sup>

Despite the apparent need for these project models, service implementation was not always a smooth process. Particularly in health-related services, time was needed to develop relationships with NHS staff to develop trust. In addition, projects needed to be aware of the strict ethical and data protection protocols for working within hospitals which could stall the delivery of the project (this is explored further in Chapter 5). The **Optamise** project, delivered by Options Wellbeing Trust, overcame this challenge as outlined below.

<sup>104</sup> Active Plus Proforma

<sup>105</sup> Neighbourhood Return - Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network Proforma

<sup>106</sup> Hospital to Home Volunteering Support Scheme - Age UK North Tyneside Proforma

Figure 4.1 Case Study: Delivering in hospitals<sup>107</sup>

### CASE STUDY: OPTAMISE OPTIONS WELLBEING TRUST DELIVERING IN HOSPITALS

A key strand of the **Optamise** project was delivering brief alcohol interventions on hospital wards in order to raise awareness of the fact that the daily recommended alcohol intake for older people is lower than the recognised recommended alcohol intake for adults. It also aimed to encourage older people to think about the effects of mixing medication and alcohol. A key challenge for the project was gaining permission for **Optamise** project staff to speak to older people on the wards. This was overcome by the hospital agreeing to provide a member of the **Optamise** project team with an honorary NHS contract which allowed them to have access to patient information, which they needed to see in order to effectively deliver the intervention.

Due to the time needed to develop these relationships, and discover what needed to be in place to ensure smooth delivery, projects realised that that it worked better to implement one new activity at a time rather than trying to implement several all at once.

*“In hindsight it would have been best to focus on the Wellbeing and Information programme in one hospital whilst dealing with NTFT [Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust] needs/requests and move into the community discharge aspect of the project, before gaining extra funding to move into further hospitals”* Hospital to Home Volunteering Support Scheme - Age UK North Tyneside<sup>108</sup>

Projects also agreed that time was needed to ensure that the Silver Dreams Fund projects could be integrated with the systems of the public sector service or organisation they were working with. Projects also highlighted the need to be mindful of the knock on effects of public sector system changes on the systems they were implementing. Often time was required to ensure that the system was working well before it was fully rolled out. This was particularly the case for projects that involved online systems. For instance, the **Neighbourhood Return** project delivered by the Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network needed time to test their electronic systems for tracking progress in finding missing older people. This process took longer than expected but was deemed to be worthwhile as the system then worked effectively.

## 4.2 Innovation within project models

The Silver Dreams Fund was intended to support innovation. The Fund recognised that it was likely that the innovation would tend to be elements of projects that were untested in a particular setting<sup>109</sup>. Project staff and partners also recognised that innovation can be a subjective concept which made it particularly challenging to know whether or not their project is considered to be innovative.

*“I’ve spend a year learning as much as it’s possible to know about that client group, talking to them and then putting the bid together. When we’re doing something we think is innovative – we think that, but other people might not...”* Senior manager<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Optamise - Options Wellbeing Trust Ecorys case study visit

<sup>108</sup> Hospital to Home Volunteering Support Scheme - Age UK North Tyneside Proforma

<sup>109</sup> Stakeholder consultation

<sup>110</sup> Two Can Associates, An Evaluation of the Cancer, Older People and Advocacy (COPA) Pilot project

The project models and interventions tested were innovative in some respects, including their use of existing models or interventions in new settings or with a different focus. For example, Northern Shape's **HenPower** project used a befriending model involving chickens, which was a new tangent for a previously tested approach to using animals in befriending models. In other cases projects brought together a range of tested activities in an innovative such as Age UK Barrow and District's **Barrow Respectability** project which offered a range of activities which were user led and encouraged beneficiaries to be fully engaged in the activities<sup>111</sup>.

In many cases activities within projects were considered to be innovative as they were new for the project or for the local community. For example the Abbey Community Centre's **Community TIME Camden** project established a Saturday Social Club with the fee to attend set as two time credits. This was new to the organisation in two respects as the Centre had not previously offered weekend activities and the use of time credits rather than cash to attend sessions was also a new concept for the Centre<sup>112</sup>.

For some projects older people leading on the design and delivery of the project was particularly innovative as this had not happened previously in their local area. As illustrated below:

*"Our 'Silver Scheme' project engaged with key people in our communities that are regularly forgotten and identified the most effective ways of delivering early intervention and preventative support to older people. We achieved this in an inspirational and innovative rarely seen in the West Midlands as it was exclusively designed and delivered for older people BY older people."* The Silver Scheme - Manor Farm<sup>113</sup>

In a few cases, projects have identified a niche idea that does not appear to have been undertaken elsewhere in the country. In some cases the innovative idea was central to the whole project such as Compassion in Dying's **End of Life Rights Advocacy** project provided a new approach to raising awareness of end of life rights. In other cases an aspect of the project was a new idea such as Age Concern Durham's **Come Dine with Us** project has included developing an interactive training course known as 'Healthy Eating for Older People' which was accredited by the Open College Network<sup>114</sup>.

### 4.3 Lessons learned

Projects learned some key lessons from delivering their projects, irrespective of the type of model adopted, these lessons included:

- Be aware that partners may misunderstand the project's purpose. This was a key challenge for projects who often found partners and volunteers had misconceptions of the project's focus. Projects discovered that talking through the project's purpose to the parties involved face-to-face tended to overcome this challenge. In one case, a project was viewed as being too depressing so the staff changed the way they explained the project as well as the project's name.
- Consider the time it takes to build trust with older people. Silver Dreams Fund projects found that this was particularly the case for more vulnerable groups, such as older people who had been bereaved. Helena Partnership's **Going Home** project<sup>115</sup> discovered that many of the older people they came in to contact with did not initially want to speak to staff but gradually over the weeks they began to trust staff and began to benefit from the support they received.

<sup>111</sup> Barrow Respectability, Age UK Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>112</sup> Abbey Community Centre, Community Time Camden, End of Grant Self Evaluation Report

<sup>113</sup> The Silver Scheme - Manor Farm Proforma

<sup>114</sup> Come Dine with Us - Age Concern Durham Proforma

<sup>115</sup> Going Home - the Helena Partnership Proforma

- Be aware of the type of volunteer and project staff needed to deliver a project. Intervention models that involved volunteers or peer befrienders relied on skilled and competent volunteers taking part in the project. Projects found that face-to-face engagement with volunteers as well as clear marketing materials helped to ensure they were recruiting suitable volunteers.
- Think creatively about how to ensure project staff and volunteers are ready to support new beneficiaries from the start. This was a particular challenge for peer befriending/advocacy intervention models. OPAAL's **Advocacy on the Wards** project overcame this challenge by ensuring there was a paid staff member that could both, co-ordinate the peer advocates and provide short notice advocate support where needed.

#### 4.4 Replicating or scaling up models

A key focus of the Silver Dreams Fund was to identify to what extent the pilot projects could be scaled up or replicated to benefit other groups of older people or other older people in different geographic locations. Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale<sup>116</sup> was used to help identify and define the various levels.

Level	Description
1	You can describe what you do and why it matters, logically, coherently and convincingly
2	You capture data that shows positive change, but you cannot confirm you caused this
3	You can demonstrate causality using a control or comparison group
4	You have one + independent replication evaluations to confirm these conclusions
5	You have manuals, systems and procedures to ensure consistent replication

Source: Nesta and Nuffield Trust, *Evidence for ageing well at home: Bringing together social investors with evidence leaders*

The majority of projects across the different types of project model had reached at least **level 1 of Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale**.<sup>117</sup> Projects were able to explain why the project mattered to their particular target group and how it had met their needs. Examples of projects being able to describe the project and why it mattered in a logical, coherent and convincing manner included:

- The project manager at RECOOP's **Personal Plans and Peer Support for Older Prisoners at HMP Leyhill**<sup>118</sup> was asked to explain the project's activities and share its successes with other organisations at a workshop organised by the Butler Trust<sup>119</sup> and the Prison Reform Trust focused on meeting the needs of older prisoners and responding to the challenge of an ageing prison population.
- A Best Practice Guide, developed by the Terence Higgins Trust, based on the **Health, Wealth and Happiness project** was deemed to provide '*clear proof that we can articulate why services are needed for older people living with HIV through consultation, research and evaluation and how best to both commission and deliver projects*'<sup>120</sup>.

<sup>116</sup> Nesta and Nuffield Trust, *Evidence for ageing well at home: Bringing together social investors with evidence leaders*

<sup>117</sup> Source: project proformas and End of Grant reports

<sup>118</sup> Personal Plans and Peer Support for Older Prisoners at HMP Leyhill - RECOOP Proforma

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.butlertrust.org.uk/>

<sup>120</sup> Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust Proforma

Many of the projects were also confident that they had reached **level 2 of Nesta's 'Scaling Up' scale** as they had captured data that showed the positive change the project has made to beneficiaries, volunteers as well as wider benefits. Primarily, the projects captured the positive change for beneficiaries through a before and after survey which included validated scales for life satisfaction and mental wellbeing as well as measures of number and type of contacts with the health service. For further details see the analysis of beneficiary surveys in Chapter 6.

A handful of projects also captured changes for beneficiaries by producing qualitative case studies of older people's experience of the project and their distance travelled<sup>121</sup>. This approach was particularly popular with projects that worked with older people who found it difficult to complete the older people's surveys due to dementia, ESOL needs or other needs. The case studies tended to be produced as a booklet and in one case included both mentor and beneficiary perspectives.

*"We now have a range of advocacy stories gathered together in a publication which very effectively describe the benefits of our service. Service users themselves tell us the difference that our service makes."* Advocacy on the Wards (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) OPAAL<sup>122</sup>

Projects felt that producing case studies had helped them to demonstrate the difference the project had made to a variety of audiences including potential funders as well as other older people. Projects also noted that being able to capture the positive change their project had made helped them to explain why their project matters (level 1) and what difference it has made:

*"The project can describe what it has done in each of the 3 programmes and demonstrate positive outcomes from each. Plus justify why each of these programmes has been important in improving the lives of older patients and volunteers."* Hospital to Home Volunteering Support Scheme - Age UK North Tyneside<sup>123</sup>

Demonstrating causality using a control or comparison group, **level 3 of Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale**, can be very challenging to achieve, particularly for smaller scale and shorter term pilot projects like those funded by the Silver Dreams Fund. Furthermore funded projects had in some cases faced challenges collecting survey data from their beneficiaries. None of the Silver Dreams Fund projects attempted to achieve level 3 of the scale.

Several projects commissioned independent evaluations of their pilot project which included both qualitative and quantitative primary research and analysis. However, as the independent evaluations did not include a control or comparison group and were not replication evaluations, the projects were not able to attain **level 4 of Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale**.

Although Silver Dreams Fund projects struggled with collecting evidence to support levels 3 and 4 of the Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale there was some success concerning **level 5 of Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale** which involves having manuals, systems and procedures to ensure consistent replication. There was recognition amongst several Silver Dreams Fund projects of the need to document the project model in order to support replication or scaling up of their activities. The projects produced a range of documents which included:

- Written manuals to help other organisations to set up a similar project.
- Online tools to provide easy access to support for older people.
- Quality standards.
- Costing models.
- Standard practices for recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers.

<sup>121</sup> Project booklets and project proformas

<sup>122</sup> Advocacy on the Ward (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL Proforma

<sup>123</sup> Project proforma

Irrespective of the type of model they adopted, projects had developed different types of tools and manuals to aid replication by the end of their funding. However, some projects have been more proactive than others concerning sharing the tools with other organisations. The logic of the Nesta framework however is that projects should produce tools and manuals to aid replication once a strong evidence base has been established. For many projects this was probably not the case within the timescales available within the Silver Dreams Fund.

For instance, as part of the **Planning for the Future** project, the Hampton Trust<sup>124</sup> worked with their partner Making Connections to develop an online version of their planning tool in order to enable older people across the country to help older people plan for the future. The Hampton Trust was surprised by the success of the online planner which has been used by over 450 people. The development of the online tool made the Hampton Trust aware of the need for the planner and has since explored a variety of avenues for the online planner such as being incorporated into the Isle of Wight's system for recording medical information.

As part of the **Silver Knowledge** project, Derwentside Homes<sup>125</sup> developed a 'project in a box' called Silver Talk which can be purchased by social housing providers. This has worked well and provided organisations with all they required to set up the project. As a result two satellite projects have been established.

There were signs that the replication of Silver Dreams Fund projects had already begun to take place; however, it was difficult to assess whether the project models had been, and will continue to be, replicated with consistency and the extent to which the manuals, systems and procedures produced ensure that this consistency is maintained.

<sup>124</sup> Planning for the Future - The Hampton Trust Proforma

<sup>125</sup> Silver Knowledge - Derwentside Homes End of grant report



## 5.0 Partnership working

This chapter looks at partnership working across the Silver Dreams Fund projects. It first reviews the different types of partners and partnerships that were developed by the projects, and then goes on to look at the successes and challenges of partnership working, and the lessons that have been learned.

### 5.1 Types of partnership and partnership working

Partnership working underpinned the delivery and management of all of the 37 Silver Dreams Fund projects. While each project was led by a lead applicant (the grant holder), all of the projects worked in partnership with others to some extent.

Across the programme, projects adopted various types of partnership arrangements. These ranged from large multi-agency partnerships with a partnership board and structure, through to partnerships built on looser terms where projects worked with other organisations for a range of reasons, such as to obtain referrals or offer additional services.

Several projects were delivered as part of a multi-agency partnership, with one organisation acting as the designated lead partner. Examples of formal multi-agency partnerships included:

- The **Going Home** project, led by Helena Partnerships with delivery jointly owned and supported by Age UK Mid Mersey, Adult Social Care & Health, the local NHS and St Helen's Council's Home Improvement Agency.
- York Mind was the lead partner in delivery of the **Silver Solutions** project, supported by Older Citizens Advocacy York, Age UK, York Blind and Partially Sighted Organisation, Horizons and York Independent Living Network.
- **OPTiC** (Older People Taking Control) project was delivered by a multi-agency partnership led by the Royal National Institute for the Blind; with Action for Blind People, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Stafford Age UK, and York Blind and Partially Sighted Society.
- The **Plymouth Senior Net** project was delivered by a formal partnership between Routeways, Care Centre and Age UK Plymouth.

Multi-agency partnerships were adopted by projects to broaden the range of services that older people are able to access by bringing in additional skills and expertise, this was particularly effective where project referral criteria were broad, for example Helena Partnership's **Going Home** project delivered a range of services for older people to support their return home after a stay in hospital and offers a range of services addressing a variety of patient needs. RECOOP's **Personal Plans and Peer Support for Older Prisoners** project, which took place in HMP Leyhill, was widely perceived as revolutionary in the prison system, being unique in the way that a third sector organisation was working in such close partnership with the prison itself.

Other models for partnership working have been somewhat less structured. Some projects were led by one organisation but supported by partner agencies in a particular role, for example for making referrals, delivering training to volunteers, providing particular skills and expertise and in the delivery of particular activities and offering further support for beneficiaries. For example, Scene Enterprises worked with three partners to train volunteers with the skills to support deafblind people, the main beneficiary group of the **In Good Hands** project. Other projects had much more informal networks of partner organisations which they worked with, such as the Sunbeams Trust's **Music for Dignity®** which worked with local community venues and day centres to deliver music sessions and gain access to beneficiaries.

There did not appear to be any Silver Dreams Fund projects that had not undertaken partnership working in some form or another, either formal or informal. In fact, to the voluntary sector organisations leading these projects, partnership working was a way of life: *"It's just what we do"*<sup>126</sup>.

### 5.1.1 Formal versus informal partnerships

Silver Dreams Fund projects varied in the extent to which they formalised their partnerships. Some worked through formal partnership arrangements and agreements, making use of service level agreements (SLAs); others relied on more informal, unwritten arrangements.

When money was involved, some projects used SLAs and felt this was necessary – thus forming a 'funder' and 'funded' type relationship within a project. For example one project found a written partnership agreement/service level agreement was helpful as it set out the expected contributions and responsibility of each of the partners. Many felt this was essential for partnership operations; however, this type of agreement could lead to a particular power dynamic between funder and funded organisations. Specifically, where the funded organisations (which might be smaller CVS organisations which was unable to lead a project themselves) preferred to work on a trust basis. Other partnerships preferred to work on a less formal, trust basis, even where money was involved<sup>127</sup>.

The need to be 'business like' was an issue which sat uncomfortably with some VCS organisations in the programme. Some organisations recognised the need to have a business mind-set to achieve what they needed to, while also being collaborative. Others felt that this did not come naturally. Where SLAs were used, projects felt they needed to set out the benefits for both partners and be clear and specific on the details so that everyone had a clear and common understanding. Some regretted not setting things out formally enough from the start.

*"The partnership has worked well overall. It would have been better to have been clear about expectations and commitments and to have written them into a formal agreement from the very start. We would have had a more robust partnership agreement right from the start of the project"* Silver Knowledge - Derwentside<sup>128</sup>

Projects used partnership steering groups or similar more 'formal' structures for management and oversight of their projects. These steering groups covered issues such as project design and direction, delivery agreements and progress, and communications and other protocols. The steering group arrangement worked well for some<sup>129</sup>. The Helena Partnership, for instance, formed a strategic partnership prior to project delivery. From this structure, the project established a number of 'operational partnerships' and 'internal' partnerships. OPAAL also had a range of types of partnership in place.

*"We developed a number of partnerships operating at different levels that have been key to our project's success. Our strategic partners include the Silver Dreams team, staff from Macmillan Cancer Support and various experts such as our external evaluators all gave freely of their expertise and knowledge working together to ensure we achieved what we set out to for older people affected by cancer. Our delivery partners proved key to ensuring that services developed locally to meet local needs as identified by Local Cancer Champions. Finally our Foundation Programme partners committed to undertaking a range of learning & training opportunities to ready themselves to take on either delivery partner or resource and development status from 2014."* Advocacy on the Ward (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL (UK)<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>127</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>128</sup> Silver Knowledge -Derwentside Pro forma and End of grant report

<sup>129</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>130</sup> Advocacy on the Ward (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) OPAAL (UK) End of grant report

Routeway's **Plymouth Senior Net** project had a project steering group of which some of the project partners were members; however, partners were also engaged indirectly with the project through more informal contact with the project manager.

Informal partnerships tended to be those where goods or services were donated in-kind rather than for payment and were not underpinned by paperwork, but relied solely on trust. For some projects this was felt to be the more natural and comfortable way of working<sup>131</sup>.

*"There has been a great deal of debate through the pilot as to the merits of having the partnerships informal or formal. As an organisation, we have experienced both across a wide range of diverse services and activities. With the RespectAbility project, all of our partnerships are informal. This has worked well for the project and the key factor of the success is down to ongoing communication. It is essential that all of our partners are well informed about the project and have a clear understanding and what we can and importantly what we cannot do. Honesty is key as this is the only way that trust can be maintained."* Barrow RespectAbility - Age UK Barrow and District<sup>132</sup>

### 5.1.2 Types of partners

Typically projects started off by partnering with organisations they had previously worked with. These existing relationships were seen as important in making a quick start and aiding efficient delivery of the work. This was because they already understood the ways in which the partners would work together, and had existing communication processes in place. For example, having had detailed discussions prior to the start of the project meant that work could get off the ground more quickly, and delivery was more effective as a result. However, many projects used this funding as an opportunity to approach new partners and set up new partnerships. The level of partnership working expanded throughout the course of the programme as new partners were engaged. One project reported: *"Partner numbers doubled as the pilot developed"*<sup>133</sup>. Only a minority of projects worked wholly with new partners.

The largest group of partners came from the voluntary and community (VCS) sector – ranging from large national charities (like Age UK, the Red Cross, Royal British Legion, RNIB, Stonewall and Macmillan Cancer Trust), through to smaller local community groups, churches, community centres, local food banks, town or parish councils, local Alzheimer's cafes, and also covered network organisations such as local CVS's, older people's networks, and local volunteer networks.

Many projects entered into partnership working with local health sector bodies such as hospitals, and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) this included partnering with GPs, practice nurses, community nurses, mental health teams, falls teams, occupational therapists, and health trainers. There were multiple examples of this across the programme, including Rural Action Yorkshire's **Touchstones** projects that worked with NHS Health and Development teams and GPs through developing social prescribing models<sup>134</sup>.

Some projects partnered with other statutory sector bodies such as local authorities (e.g. Social Care teams, Housing Support teams), the Police, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and the Fire and Rescue Service. Eccleshill Community and Youth Association's **Men @ Eccy Meccy** project ran intergenerational work with local youth projects focussed on developing youth skills with students from PRU's. The Royal National Institute of Blind People's project, **OPTiC** developed a partnership with the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to roll out the use of its 'Eyes Right' screening tool to fire service staff that visit older people in their homes.

<sup>131</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>132</sup> Barrow RespectAbility - Age UK Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>133</sup> Come Dine With Us – Age UK North Tyneside End of grant report

<sup>134</sup> Project pro-forma

Projects had approached and worked with private sector organisations – mainly in the residential and care sectors but also with local businesses, chemists, local shops and restaurants. One project was overwhelmed with interest when they asked local businesses to get involved<sup>135</sup>. Northern Shape's **HenPower** worked within a range of care settings - both statutory and private - including care homes, sheltered accommodation and respite care to engage residents. Routeway's **Plymouth's Seniornet** project worked with Plymouth Community Homes, the largest housing association in their area. Age UK Barrow and District's **Barrow RespectAbility** project worked with local high street stores such as B&Q and Asda who donated materials for their activities. Asda also asked Age Concern Durham's **Come Dine with Us** project to help them set up a new lunch club in one of their in-store restaurants. Experiences of working with the private sector were reported to be positive and particularly successful when the project's work aligned with a company's corporate social responsibility policy.

Some Silver Dreams Fund projects also worked with local media partners to help with publicity and awareness raising. Many projects reported having success with this approach, such as the Sunbeams Trust's **Music for Dignity®** which was featured several times in local news. They found this worked best when targeting messages to the local agenda and keeping a regular flow of communications. The role and effect of press coverage on the Silver Dreams Fund is explored in greater depth in Chapter 7.

Finally, some Silver Dreams Fund projects engaged a partner specifically to work with them on evaluation, usually through a contractual relationship, for instance with local independent consultants or larger providers like Coram, Middlesex University or Hall Aitken.

## 5.2 Partnership roles

Partners have played a range of roles in projects which are discussed below.

### 5.2.1 Referrals and access to target groups

For many of the Silver Dreams Fund projects, partners have played an important role in providing referrals. This included referrals from other statutory partners, GPs and other health organisations such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and council services such as Adult Social Care. For instance through working with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network's **Neighbourhood Return** project achieved its target registrations for people with memory problems via referrals from healthcare professionals<sup>136</sup>.

The **Heart to Heart** project delivered by B:rap found an effective referral process working in partnership with Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Project staff stated that having the CCG as a partner introduced B:rap as *"a credible and reputable organisation"*<sup>137</sup>. The key lead from the CCG has provided *"knowledge and strategic links with the NHS organisations we need to enlist in order to fulfil the aims of the project."*<sup>138</sup>

*"The project receives referrals from local GP practices and health and social care professionals who have identified men who are going through life changing events such as bereavement, redundancy, retirement or becoming a carer for their partners, and are struggling to cope."* Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community Association<sup>139</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>136</sup> Neighbourhood Return – Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network Proforma

<sup>137</sup> Heart to Heart – B:rap Proforma

<sup>138</sup> Ibid

<sup>139</sup> Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community Association End of grant report

*“Key to the success of the project was forming strong partnerships with existing providers of services for older people, as they often had the networks and resources in place to identify isolated older men, even if they did not have the resources or expertise to engage them. The most important partnerships were formed with the Community Mental Health Teams for Older People, the Partnership for Older People Programme (POPP), Age UK Memory Advisors, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, Dorset Age Partnerships, and a number of local churches.” The Countrymen’s Club - Future Roots<sup>140</sup>*

*“We delivered two courses for Stennack surgery and one each for St. Keverne and Porthallow; all the participants were identified and signposted by the surgeries, with Stennack providing detailed feedback that 50% of the patients did not return following their attendance on the course.” Active Plus<sup>141</sup>*

Many projects also worked widely with voluntary sector partners to obtain referrals. Working with known VCS organisations like Age UK was felt to be useful for partnership working – in that it helped to bring in referrals to lesser well known voluntary groups when they partnered with better known ‘brand names’. VCS partners also facilitated access to specific target groups of beneficiaries, such as men or particular ethnic groups<sup>142</sup>.

While many partners supported the referral process, some projects reported some initial problems due to unsuitable or ineligible beneficiaries being referred on the basis of a lack of understanding of the project aims. These types of problems are often common in the early stages of projects. Project staff reported that giving a clearer explanation of the project role helped to alleviate this problem. For example, one project noted that some referral agencies felt that the aim of their Silver Dreams Fund project was simply to receive a greater number of referrals, rather than to support frail elderly people to use their personal budgets. The project resolved the issue by more clearly articulating the nature of the project to referral agencies in communications and publicity material. Another project developed a referral guide as a response to inappropriate referrals being made by some of the partner agencies they were working with.

One project reported working with a chemist which offered home delivery prescription services to help them identify suitable older people for referral<sup>143</sup>.

In addition to referrals, partnership working also provided a way to reach beneficiaries and raise awareness of what support was available. For example, by placing articles in partner newsletters, publications or websites, the **Community TIME Camden** project at the Abbey Community Centre *“used existing groups already based at our community centre to help us spread the word such as the South Sudanese Women’s Group and the HENNA Asian Women’s Organisation.”*<sup>144</sup>

### 5.2.2 A wider service offer

Partners played an important role in supporting delivery by enabling projects to provide a wider service offer, helping to open up the scope of project support beyond the core work of the delivery organisation, and as such, offer a more complete and diverse range of support to beneficiaries.

*“North London Cares, a local social enterprise and charity, joined us as partners for the Saturday Social Club and they provided cooking volunteers to prepare the food with the assistance of CTC participants. A free, freshly prepared home cooked lunch was then provided to participants – a different type of national dish from a different country each month... Saturday Social Club has been hugely popular... We’re really proud of this innovative partnership with another organisation and the way in which this event has gone from strength to strength and been defined and shaped by those who attend it.” Community TIME Camden – Abbey Community Centre<sup>145</sup>*

<sup>140</sup> The Countrymen’s Club - Future Roots End of grant report

<sup>141</sup> Active Plus Proforma

<sup>142</sup> Project Proformas

<sup>143</sup> Barrow RespectAbility - Age Concern Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>144</sup> Community TIME Camden - Abbey Community Centre Proforma

<sup>145</sup> End of grant report

### 5.2.3 Practical and in kind support

Partners played a practical and financially supportive role in some projects, for example providing access to venues and facilities or additional activities at low or no cost. These in-kind donations helped projects financially and enabled them to reach more beneficiaries and offer better services. The **Active Plus** project partnered with Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service which allowed the project to use local fire stations as a venue in rural areas where there was no community venue for delivery to take place. The Sunbeams Music Trust's **Music for Dignity**® project secured discounts from local venues owned by the Freemasons and match funding was provided by the Copeland Community Fund which was keen to support further development of the project.

*"We found that organisations/community groups etc. were very receptive and keen to discuss possible use of their venue or facilities when we approached them and some suggested additional things which enhanced the activity. Bishop Auckland College offered access to their hairdressing & beauty students & their IT suite to clients attending the lunch club at the college."* Come Dine With Us - Age Concern Durham<sup>146</sup>

Partners also played a role in providing transport for project beneficiaries, and this has been particularly beneficial for projects working with more vulnerable older people and in rural areas. Some partners provided practical support to projects, such as in OPAAL's **Advocacy on the Wards** project where Macmillan provided the administrative function for the national cancer champions' board.

### 5.2.4 Training

Partners also played a role in helping to upskill staff and beneficiaries, and in building the capacity of delivery organisations. RNIB's **OPTiC** project used partnership working to enable them to provide broader support for older people with sight loss based on the varied skills and expertise within their partnership organisations, this included exchanges of skills and training sessions delivered by the different agencies such as housing agencies and social care services. The **Active Plus** project delivered several courses with Cornwall Carers, another VSC organisation, who identified participants and funded their transport costs. Volunteer Cornwall's partnership with the Training, Learning and Development Unit at Cornwall Council enabled the **BBASS** project to contribute towards the content for a new training course and provided the opportunity to be members of a panel which chose the organisation to deliver the training. The **Barrow RespectAbility** project, delivered by Age Concern Barrow and District, provided a space for older people to establish and run enterprises by using their own skills or developing new ones which encouraged social interaction and provided services to the local community.

Figure 5.1 Case Study: Partnership working

#### CASE STUDY: BARROW RESPECTABILITY: AGE CONCERN BARROW PARTNERSHIP ADDED VALUE

**Barrow RespectAbility**<sup>147</sup> developed strong partnership links within the local community; these partnerships benefited the project as local organisations provided a base for the project's volunteers who are known as 'Urban Angels' and a supermarket chain agreed to donate items for the cookery activities delivered by the project. Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service provided a free training package to the project volunteers and training and support was offered by the national Walking for Health Initiative for volunteer walk leaders supporting the project. The support from local community and businesses was felt to have been key to successful delivery of the project, and supported them to ensure vulnerable older people can access and benefit from Age UK services.

<sup>146</sup> End of grant report

<sup>147</sup> Barrow RespectAbility – Age Concern Barrow Proforma

### 5.2.5 Access to volunteers

Access to potential volunteers and also methods for recruiting, training, monitoring and rewarding volunteers was another key role and motivation for partnership working. For instance Routeway's **Plymouth SeniorNet** project worked with Age UK Plymouth which helped the project to access older people to become volunteers and also provided access to existing Age UK volunteers<sup>148</sup>.

Similarly, the **Touchstones** project run by Rural Action Yorkshire worked with three local Age UKs. As well as being able to use the existing links to volunteers that the Age UKs had in local communities, the project benefited from adopting Age UK processes in relation to volunteer sign up and monitoring.

## 5.3 Partnership working between Silver Dreams Fund projects

In addition to the partnership working undertaken by individual Silver Dreams Fund projects, there were also several examples of cross programme partnership working.

- Compassion in Dying's **End of Life Rights Advocacy** project developed strategic partnerships with other Silver Dream lead organisations, SubCo Trust and the Hampton Trust, to ensure that the informational materials they developed met the needs of the local communities and shared knowledge and experience on working with black and ethnic minority communities. They also ran an end-of-life training course for SubCo staff.<sup>149</sup>
- SubCo also worked with Care and Repair in terms of enabling their wider engagement.
- OPAAL and Compassion in Dying projects held a number of joint meetings in order to explore opportunities for working together. Compassion in Dying provided OPAAL with meeting spaces in central London and training for advocates working to support people with cancer with end of life issues. OPAAL has provided Compassion in Dying with information and access to their membership networks.

Sharing learning through project blogs also facilitated some collaboration. Projects across the programme worked together to share learning, this included reading blog posts, sharing twitter links and arranging meetings to discuss good practice and opportunities for working together. For instance York Mind shared learning with another project on how to encourage GPs to engage with delivery.

*"Through social media tools such as Twitter and Wordpress, we have continued to share and learn about other Silver Dreams projects. For example, sharing article links via re-tweeting on Twitter and Wordpress, or learning about how other projects are engaging with older people using evaluative tools such as using film or poetry."* Barrow RespectAbility – Age Concern Barrow and District<sup>150</sup>

This sharing of learning between projects developed well despite the programme's competitive element regarding the award of flagship funding.

## 5.4 Successes of partnership working

Overall, projects were very positive regarding the successes of partnership working and the positive effects it had on the delivery of their Silver Dreams Fund project. Many projects said they could not have achieved what they had without the support of partners.

<sup>148</sup> Ecorys case study visit

<sup>149</sup> Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - SubCo Trust Proforma

<sup>150</sup> Barrow RespectAbility – Age Concern Barrow Proforma

*“The success of Music For Dignity® needed cooperation between all partners, given the vulnerability of the older people and the amount of activity, movement and transport involved. We encouraged meaningful professional, personal relationships through exciting workshops and concerts in the Homes and Civic Hall.”* Music for Dignity® - Sunbeam Trust<sup>151</sup>

*“Partnership working is therefore crucial from frontline joint case work through to involvement at a more strategic commissioning level to enable policy changes and implementation.”* Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - SubCo Trust<sup>152</sup>

*“We have been delighted with the commitment demonstrated by our partners in the project. The activities all have benefits for the partners; for some it is opening their facilities when they would be closed, increasing customers at catering establishments, links to employee volunteer schemes that they may have in place, or helping them reach out to members of the community they would struggle to reach on their own.”* Come Dine With Us – Age Concern Durham<sup>153</sup>

Some of the positive outcomes of partnership working included a greater ability to meet programme outcomes, greater respect and recognition, an improved ability to influence the local policy agenda and a better quality service offer.

A number of projects described partnerships as being central to the delivery of their programme outcomes. In particular, supporting the referral process was highlighted by project staff as one of the key ways that partnerships have supported the success of project delivery and specifically where partners have been able to help projects access more and a wider range of beneficiaries than they could have otherwise. For several projects this meant they surpassed their agreed beneficiary numbers in programme outcomes agreed with the Fund.

*“Crucially, it [partnership working] has led to good numbers of referrals of older people who were at risk of becoming vulnerable – preventing them from becoming acute cases and in need of more frequent and costly intervention.”* Active Plus<sup>154</sup>

For SubCo Trust their partnership working led to enhanced reputation and the development of mutual respect.

*“Respect for SubCo has increased, particularly from the statutory sector, as there is now a recognition of the extent and quality of work undertaken. Partnership working has significantly raised the profile of the project, with SubCo now seen as the lead agency on work with older people and personalisation in the community.”* Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - SubCo Trust<sup>155</sup>

Partnership working also led to projects being able to influence the local agenda. For example, the Abbey Community Centre's **Community TIME Camden** has already helped influence the direction of services tendered for older people by our local council and Age UK Camden<sup>156</sup>. Influencing policy is discussed further in Chapter 6.

For one project, having a referral process built on partnership working (discussed above) led to better quality services being offered to older people. The Terrence Higgins Trust worked with NPL (Naz Project London) who provide sexual health and HIV prevention and support services to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in London. As well as Naz referring people into their project, THT made cross-referrals back to Naz.

<sup>151</sup> Sunbeams end of project evaluation report

<sup>152</sup> Empowering Asian Elders to cope Better with Disability and Long-Term illness - SubCo Trust Proforma

<sup>153</sup> Come Dine with Us – Age Concern Durham Proforma

<sup>154</sup> Project pro forma

<sup>155</sup> Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - SubCo Trust Proforma

<sup>156</sup> Community TIME Camden - Abbey Community Centre End of grant report



*"We have made referrals to Naz Project London for older people who needed specific support around legal aid (including visa and leave to remain applications with the Home Office) which fell outside of the parameters of [our project]. This partnership has ensured we are able to signpost older people to specialised services."* Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terrence Higgins Trust<sup>157</sup>

## 5.5 Challenges of partnership working

Challenges associated with working in partnership with the NHS posed the toughest problems for Silver Dreams Fund projects. These challenges were often unanticipated by projects, and were also numerous. Common issues included difficulties with:

- Negotiating complex structures and hierarchies.
- Finding the right person to engage with in the first place.
- Finding and talking to a decision maker.
- Turnover of NHS staff.
- Getting appropriate permissions or sign off for activity.
- Being required to gain ethical approval.
- Data protection difficulties and data sharing challenges restricting access to potential beneficiaries.
- Getting to grips with unfamiliar processes and protocols.
- NHS staff not seeing the project as a priority against other medical roles.
- Disseminating the project and its aims among relevant frontline staff.<sup>158</sup>

*"At the start of the project many of the challenges of working in partnership with NHS had not been anticipated, especially in relation to the number of people the project needed to involve at certain points (17 separate departments). There were people that needed to be notified about the existence of the project and committees that needed to grant permission. Materials produced for volunteers or patients/carers needed to have clearance. Project publicity needed to gain clearance. In addition the protocols and restrictions we have had to adhere [to] also significantly impacted timescales and altered our project plans and outputs."* Hospital to Home - Age UK North Tyneside<sup>159</sup>

*"Because of the ethics process, we were over-reliant on NHS partners and to some extent the project was hinged on their ability to engage in potential beneficiaries. The evaluation process demonstrated that NHS partners found it challenging to communicate the project, and this became a secondary consideration to the medical aspects of their role. Leaflets were handed out – but without a more encouraging word about the Heart to Heart offer, we fear that many patients did not understand the support on offer. Due to data protection restrictions, we were unable to make contact with potential beneficiaries, after they had left the hospital. We were only able to contact beneficiaries, once they had attended cardiac rehabilitation, and clearly our project was designed to encourage take-up from women who were unlikely to attend! The few matches that we received did provide us with some indication that the process was really worthwhile and the fear and isolation associated with this type of experience was significantly reduced."* Heart to Heart – B:rap<sup>160</sup>

*"The initial drive to gain a foothold in acute services was not successful, partly due to a lack of understanding of the role of the advocate but also due to the organisation aiming the awareness raising at the wrong level."* Advocacy on the Ward (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL (UK)<sup>161</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terrence Higgins Trust Proforma

<sup>158</sup> Various sources: project pro forma's, end of grant reports

<sup>159</sup> Hospital to Home - Age UK North Tyneside End of grant report

<sup>160</sup> Heart to Heart –B:rap End of grant report

<sup>161</sup> Advocacy on the Ward (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL (UK)End of grant report

These problems led to long lead-in times, often delaying projects and had a knock on effect in terms of low referral rates from NHS partners meaning that some projects struggled to meet beneficiary outcome targets<sup>162</sup>.

*“The Alcohol Specialist Nurse Service offered considerable support in getting [our] worker established at the hospital, but as their remit was more dependent drinkers, time working with this team resulted in low referrals. This work is breaking new ground and projects all over the country are trying to find the best way of delivery. A move to the Emergency Department changed all of that, with appropriate referrals now being seen. Had this been set up at the beginning then the project team believe the target would have been met.”* OPTAMISE - Options Wellbeing Trust<sup>163</sup>

Challenges when working with other statutory bodies were also evident. When working with local authorities, it was often difficult for projects to determine who they needed to speak to because of their size and complexity. There were also issues around sharing data and having common data frameworks with partners in the statutory sector. Another issue involved getting statutory sector bodies to grasp the concept of the project and feel confident in their role within it, often because this involved new ways of working which needed time and training to bed in.

*“The Fire Service technicians reported an issue of confidence around engaging with older people. Their initial training had been effective in raising awareness of sight loss and providing the information needed to use ‘Eyes Right’ tool but technicians were struggling with how to talk to and engage with older people about sight loss. In response, [we provided] refresher training which included tips on how to clearly convey the support services on offer and encourage older people to participate.”* OPTiC - RNIB<sup>164</sup>

Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network’s **Neighbourhood Return** project worked with a range of police forces, each of whom responded differently to their project idea. Through partnership working the project had to understand and work with the police on a range of concerns including volunteers’ and carers’ safety and an initial desire for volunteers to be trained and DBS checked.

Challenges were occasionally encountered when working with care homes, as providers sometimes refused to accept that any of their residents were isolated, or lonely or had specific needs which were not being catered for. This created a barrier to partnership working for some projects<sup>165</sup>.

There were also challenges when partnering with voluntary sector partners, some of which mirrored the experiences of working with other sectors and others that were unique. These included the lack of flexibility or capacity on the part of (mainly voluntary sector) partners to be able to deliver services at times when it was needed, even when they were due to be paid for that work. One project ended up having to provide more support to beneficiaries than they had originally intended which had to be overcome in the longer term as it was unsustainable. For some projects, structural issues in partner organisations caused difficulties, in particular with staff members leaving, organisational re-structuring (for example in local Age UK’s) or lack of time for staff to work with the project due to conflicting priorities<sup>166</sup>. This challenge also linked to organisational culture change. Bringing together partner’s organisational cultures was challenging for some. One project worked with a smaller VCS group that had a maximum capacity of older people they could help from within their centres. The group had not, and would not consider doing outreach work into older people’s homes to help them access the same service. It took a long time for a culture change in how they delivered services to be accepted. Once it did the group massively increased their reach<sup>167</sup>. Some projects encountered challenges when fellow VCS organisations saw them as ‘competition’ rather than as potential

<sup>162</sup> Our Celebration Silver Solutions encountered similar issues

<sup>163</sup> OPTAMISE - Options Wellbeing Trust End of grant report

<sup>164</sup> OPTiC - RNIB End of grant report

<sup>165</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>166</sup> Hospital to Home Age UK North Tyneside End of grant report

<sup>167</sup> Project feedback at learning event

collaborators. This was even the case between coterminous local Age UK's who did not have a history of partnership working.

Data sharing and agreeing on a common data framework to use was also a challenge for many VCS partnerships. Some VCS organisations could not agree on the level and type of monitoring and evaluation required.

*"The project management approach [we used] was very output and outcome delivery focused. This necessarily meant embedding reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes into the project from the outset and was perhaps regarded as being too heavy initially by Age UK partners. However, we now have been able to capture some very detailed feedback... which reflects the varying levels of impact we have had ... We believe we can demonstrate a fairly robust theory of change which should provide evidence for future service delivery."* Touchstones – Rural Action Yorkshire<sup>168</sup>

Some challenges were also encountered when partners referred on their most difficult beneficiaries to a project which was sometimes seen as 'dumping'.

*"Where difficulties have arisen have been where some partners 'off-load' more critical caseloads and make assumptions that our funded pilot project will be a cheaper option in achieving a successful conclusion. This has resulted in the association becoming stretched to capacity and having to make difficult decisions on our ability to help."* Silver Scheme - Manor Farm<sup>169</sup>

More broadly, some project partnerships suffered conflict and difficult personal relationships which hindered the effective delivery of the project. Looking back, projects said they had to learn to accept conflict and disagreement as normal and find a way to move on. Getting on the telephone to someone to talk things through was often the best remedy<sup>170</sup>.

Getting partnerships to be innovative was sometimes a challenge. Encouraging partners to bring forward new ideas was difficult and some partnerships overcame this by formalising the process into a meeting. This stifled innovation to some extent within the programme. Some lead organisations found the best way to encourage innovation was to float an idea into a partnership meeting and then afterwards in the minutes pose it as someone else's or the group's idea so that everyone had ownership<sup>171</sup>.

## 5.6 Lessons learned

Lessons have been learned around how best to formulate and undertake partnership working in this field.

- Consider whether you need formal or informal partnerships and use the appropriate level of paperwork.
  - Formal partnerships are particularly useful where a specific partner is crucial to the effective delivery of the project, such as a delivery partner or an organisation with specialist expertise. Projects found that in this case a partnership agreement or a service level agreement was helpful to ensure a common, clear understanding of each partner's role and in setting out the expected contributions and responsibilities. Formal partnership agreements become much more essential where money will be changing hands.

<sup>168</sup> Touchstones – Rural Action Yorkshire Proforma

<sup>169</sup> Silver Scheme - Manor Farm Proforma

<sup>170</sup> Project feedback at learning event

<sup>171</sup> Project feedback at learning event

- Informal partnerships can be very useful for generating referrals, and to link with organisations that provide complementary or in kind services or expertise. Partnership agreements are not always needed for informal partners however it is useful to ensure that the partners remain involved and interested in the project. For instance Age UK Barrow achieved this by maintaining on-going communication with their key partners and ensuring that they were always honest with their partners.
- Partnership working takes time. Projects fed back that time was needed to find suitable partners and time to build trust and mutual understanding. Projects also needed to ensure sufficient time to set up the necessary partnership working arrangements (such as partnership agreements, protocols and referral criteria). This was particularly the case for new partnerships where there is no existing working arrangement or communication processes, but also applies to existing partnerships which are involved in a specific project arrangement.
- Partnership working with the NHS comes with its own set of challenges that need to be recognised, and planned for. Projects learned not to underestimate the time it will take to effectively partner with NHS structures. Projects also learned that they needed to allow sufficient lead in time and resourcing to contact and convince the right people, obtain the right permissions, come to terms with the required protocols and obtain ethical approval where necessary.
- Use a range of tactics when partnering with the NHS. The following things worked well for projects. Finding a champion within the NHS structure who can promote your ideas and your activities, worked particularly well in mental health settings. In addition finding and talking directly to the decision makers helped projects to secure buy in more quickly. For Options Wellbeing Trust's **Optamrise project** getting their worker on an honorary NHS contract meant that their staff member was able to view all patients' records. Their project would not have worked without this contract arrangement<sup>172</sup>.
- Partnership working works best where there are common goals and objectives. Projects learned that it is worth investing time in understanding partners' corporate goals and aspirations and identify where these overlap with those of the project. Then recognise and build on areas where partners can work towards mutually aligned aims or areas of common interest. This applies to the voluntary sector, statutory sector and also private sectors. Aligning their work with a company's corporate social responsibility policy was an effective strategy for some projects. Several projects found that through project delivery they could make cross referrals and assist partners in reaching beneficiaries and help them achieve their own targets.
- Be clear about expectations from the start. This applies to levels or volumes of service delivery through to monitoring and evaluation. Projects found discussing the project's requirements for monitoring and evaluation up front with partners would have avoided difficulties on data collection, data sharing systems or access to data. Projects felt that having early sight of evaluation requirements is essential to help lead organisations pave the way with partners where there may be requirements placed upon them.
- Communicate the project aims clearly to referral partners to ensure that eligible beneficiaries are referred to the project. One Silver Dreams Fund project made sure that the eligibility criteria were specified on publicity materials as well as communications with their project partners. Another project developed a referral guide to help partners understand the referral criteria.

<sup>172</sup> Case study visit

- Face to face communication works best, particularly at first when partnerships are being formed and trust being built. Projects then used a range of communications, depending on partners' preferences (some prefer email, others prefer telephone or meetings). Projects found that tailored communications worked better than generic ones. Ensure partners receive regular feedback, on how the project is progressing, what the progress is against targets and what outcomes are being achieved<sup>173</sup>.

<sup>173</sup> Lessons learned derived from project feedback at learning event, March 2014.

## 6.0 Outcomes and impacts

This chapter sets out the available evidence on the outcomes and impacts of Silver Dreams Fund projects. It first looks at effects on participants' mental wellbeing and life satisfaction based on quantitative survey data and qualitative evidence, then goes on to explore whether projects have challenged perceptions of older people as well as the outcomes and impacts that have been experienced by Silver Dreams Fund organisations, and, finally, provides an assessment of value for money.

### 6.1 Outcomes for older people

The survey data used in this analysis draws on the results of **966** sets of surveys of older people at the start and at the end of their involvement with the Silver Dreams Fund. The surveys tracked a number of core outcomes including wellbeing and life satisfaction that all projects were required to collect. In addition, projects could also select from a number of optional outcome indicators to measure change in other outcome areas. This chapter focuses on the core indicators as too few projects selected the same optional outcome indicators to permit any detailed analysis.

In the analysis that follows a change that is statistically significant is one that is not likely to occur randomly. A non-significant finding, in contrast, is one where we cannot confidently rule out the possibility that the change was due simply to chance. It is important to note that when the sample size is large, even very small changes may be statistically significant, and conversely large changes may fail to achieve significance in a small sample. A significance level of  $p \leq .05$  was chosen to restrict the probability of 'false positives' (Type 1 error).

#### 6.1.1 Mental wellbeing

The shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale was used in the survey as a measure of mental wellbeing<sup>174</sup>. Findings indicate that Silver Dreams Fund projects had a positive effect on older people's mental wellbeing. Overall<sup>175</sup>, there has been a statistically significant increase in mental wellbeing of 3.3 points. For 14 of the projects there were statistically significant increases in respondents' mental wellbeing, including Age UK Barrow's **Barrow RespectAbility**, Our Celebration's **Silver Solutions** and Scene Enterprise's **In Good Hands** project with increases of 9.92, 6.63 and 6.5 respectively.

<sup>174</sup>This scale comprises seven items and produces a range of scores from 7-45, with higher scores indicating greater mental wellbeing. The seven items are: I've been feeling optimistic about the future; I've been feeling useful; I've been feeling relaxed; I've been dealing with problems well; I've been thinking clearly; I've been feeling close to other people; I've been able to make up my own mind about things.

<sup>175</sup> This relates to 27 projects that had returned matched sets of surveys from the start and end of participants' engagement with Silver Dreams Fund projects

**Table 6.1 Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale Scores**

Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
Total	25.17	21.6	966	0.000
Barrow Respectability - Age Concern Barrow	19.96	29.88	50	0
Elders, Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action <sup>176</sup>	23.04	30.49	45	0
Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness Subco Trust	14.83	21.67	79	0
Silver Solutions - Our Celebration	17.25	23.88	16	0
In Good Hands - Scene Enterprise	18.38	24.88	24	0
OPTAMISE - Options Wellbeing	16.02	21.86	35	0
Relative Experience - Grandparents Plus	18.22	23.44	9	0.006
Music for Dignity® - Annie Mawson's Sunbeams Music Trust	21.24	25.9	21	0
Forwards Together - Derbyshire Association for the Blind	23.79	27.53	75	0
Active Plus	24.67	28.02	91	0
Altogether Better - Sheffield Wellbeing Trust	21.04	23.19	48	0.002
Community TIME Camden - The Abbey Community Centre	21.91	24.04	45	0
OPTC (Older People Taking Control) - RNIB	22.11	23.77	44	0.042
HenPower - Northern Shape	23.52	24.71	31	0.009
* Related t-test is significant at 5% if p<0.05				

Source: Ecorys Survey data, n=966

Qualitative evidence reinforces the positive difference that Silver Dreams Fund projects have made to beneficiaries' mental wellbeing as the case study below illustrates.

<sup>176</sup> The figures for Winchester Area Community Action's Elders, Crafts and English Exchange project and SubCo Trust's Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness survey data should be viewed with caution due to both projects reporting beneficiaries difficulties to understand the statements within WEMWBS

Figure 6.1 Case Study: Mental Wellbeing

### CASE STUDY: MUSIC FOR DIGNITY® (FORMERLY KNOWN AS SILVER LINERS), ANNIE MAWSON SUNBEAMS MUSIC TRUST: IMPROVEMENTS TO MENTAL WELLBEING

The **Music for Dignity**®<sup>177</sup> project worked with older people with physical disabilities, known as Silver Liners, to deliver music concerts in care homes to older people with dementia. Care home residents were encouraged to take part in the concerts and were provided with a musical instrument. Project staff and beneficiaries noticed an improvement in general mental wellbeing after the concert.

For one Silver Liner being part of the project had led to her feeling happier than she had been in years due to the project giving her a focus and a structure to her day. The Silver Liner felt that without the project she would have had no motivation to get up in the morning.

*“It’s something to get up for when I know I’m going singing.”*

#### 6.1.2 Life satisfaction

Survey respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their ‘life as a whole nowadays’<sup>178</sup>. Table 6.2 (below) shows that there has been a statistically significant increase of 1.22 points in respondents’ overall satisfaction with life at the end of their involvement with the Silver Dreams Fund projects. For 15 of the projects there was a statistically significant increase in respondents’ life satisfaction scores, including Option Counselling’s **Optamise** and Sunbeams’ **Music for Dignity**® with increases of 3.31 and 2.58 respectively. Across these 15 projects all four of the types of intervention model explored in chapter 4 were represented, suggesting that each one had potential to successfully achieve positive outcomes in this area. It also should be noted that a number of projects adopted more than one intervention model which made it more difficult to explore the effectiveness of different types of models in isolation.

Table 6.2: Satisfaction with life as a whole nowadays

Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
Total	5.77	6.99	921	0.000
Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - Subco Trust	2.53	5.99	79	0
OPTAMISE - Options Wellbeing	2.26	5.57	35	0
Music for Dignity® - Annie Mawson’s Sunbeams Music Trust	4.79	7.37	19	0
Elders, Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action <sup>179</sup>	7.34	9.71	41	0
Silver Solutions - Our Celebration	4.19	6.56	16	0

<sup>177</sup> Ecorys Case study visit

<sup>178</sup> On a scale of 0-10, where 0 was ‘extremely dissatisfied’ and 10 was ‘extremely satisfied.’

<sup>179</sup> The figures for Winchester Area Community Action’s Elders, Crafts and English Exchange project and SubCo Trust’s Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness survey data should be viewed with caution due to both projects reporting beneficiaries difficulties to understand the statements within WEMWBS



Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
Barrow Respectability - Age Concern Barrow	6.08	8.38	50	0
In Good Hands - Scene Enterprise	4.71	6.25	24	0
Forwards Together - Derbyshire Association for the Blind	5.76	6.69	74	0
Active Plus	6.68	7.42	78	0
Altogether Better - Sheffield Wellbeing Trust	6.48	7.22	46	0.004
Silver Solutions - Manor Farm CA	6.68	7.38	53	0.008
Community TIME Camden - The Abbey Community Centre	6.38	6.8	45	0.015
Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community and Youth Association	6.44	7.56	16	0.031
Relative Experience - Grandparents Plus	2.75	5.38	8	0.039
Silver Knowledge - Derwentside Homes	6.55	7.3	33	0.04
Silverlinks - Care & Repair	6.39	7.25	28	0.045
* Related t-test is significant at 5% if $p < 0.05$				

**Source:** Ecorys Survey data, n=891

Qualitative evidence illustrates that establishing on-going contact with the project and providing opportunities for getting out of the house was reported to make a huge difference to beneficiaries irrespective of how the support was delivered, as illustrated below:

*“If it hadn’t been running, I don’t know how my life would have gone. Downhill, I’m pretty sure. Because I wouldn’t have been in the Monday club, there would have been no Wednesday job, no Thurs club. I would have been doing nothing. There was nothing else before this. Last Christmas, I didn’t have my wife, and I was climbing the walls. I spent £900 going away and I didn’t enjoy a day of it, I just cried every day. That’s no life, you have to get yourself out. I would go as far as to say it was a life saver.”* Beneficiary<sup>180</sup>

<sup>180</sup> Community Evaluator interview

In other cases it was the particular activities at the project that the beneficiaries enjoyed taking part in that led to an increase in life satisfaction as the below case study illustrates:

**Figure 6.2 Case Study: Life satisfaction**<sup>181</sup>

#### **CASE STUDY: THE COUNTRYMEN'S CLUB FUTURE ROOTS – LIFE SATISFACTION**

An older man with Alzheimer's was a retired dairy farmer and attended the Countrymen's Club regularly. He was very quiet and withdrawn in the early part of the activity. However, when the activity moved on to grooming and petting the cattle he visibly brightened up and was energised. It was clear he had a real affinity to the cattle, and when asked what he got from the project he answered:

*"This [the farm] is a real tonic for me, it gives you a lift. I love being with them [the animals]"*

In some cases the support that made the difference to beneficiaries was provided by a volunteer which they were able to build up a relationship with. The knowledge that they would see that person at a set time each week was key for some older people as it gave them something to look forward to:

*"I look forward all week to her coming. Life here is unstimulating...I call her 'my sanity'; it saves me from being down in the dumps a lot or thinking am I going to get like everybody else. I'm very, very fortunate that I've got V."* Older person in care home, SPECS - Learning for the 4<sup>th</sup> Age<sup>182</sup>

In cases where life satisfaction improved most dramatically the older people tended to be vulnerable and needed on-going support from the project staff, volunteers and/ or peer befrienders to maintain this improvement.

#### **6.1.3 Social contact**

Typically projects felt that beneficiaries had increased social contact with other people through the Silver Dreams Fund activities. This had led to them feeling closer to other people which in some cases led to older people feeling less lonely. There were a range of different approaches that led to older people feeling closer to others. However, group sessions and mentoring, whether by volunteers or other beneficiaries, appeared to be particularly effective in improving social contact between older people. A number of projects reported that they established social groups following requests from older people in order to enable them to have more contact with other older people.

"Our group work and mentoring offer people the opportunity to build new social networks and learn new skills. For example this service user reported: *"My mental health was not good before...my doctor was suggesting I go on anti-depressants, which I think was caused by my loneliness mainly, but because of the project I am now more confident of going out, I get excited about going out to the peer support groups and discussion groups. It has encouraged me to get involved"*. Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust<sup>183</sup>

#### **6.1.4 Knowledge and skills**

Improvement in knowledge tended to be an outcome in projects that supported older people to manage on-going disabilities or illness, as well as practical decision such as making a will or deciding whether to move house. Across the different types of projects, older people felt that the information they had received had helped them to think about their next steps and to take control of their situation.

<sup>181</sup> Ecorys Ethnographic research

<sup>182</sup> SPECS - Learning for the 4<sup>th</sup> Age Final report: Exploring learning in later life - A summary report of the evaluation of 'Learning for the Fourth Age'

<sup>183</sup> Health, Wealth and Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust case study provided by project

For example, beneficiaries of Options Wellbeing Trust's **Optamise** project were involved in awareness raising sessions that included information on how alcohol interacts with medication and the effects on their health of regularly exceeding the recommended daily units of alcohol for older people. One older person, who had drunk heavily for many years, found the information, along with the support, he received from **Optamise** helpful in helping him to manage his drinking:

*"That's what I like about Options, I've learned about alcohol that I don't think I would learn anywhere else and I've definitely benefited from it."* Optamise - Options Wellbeing Trust beneficiary<sup>184</sup>

Learning from peers about how they have managed their own situation was also beneficial for older people. For instance, one older person who was partially sighted fed back that they had learned a lot from other older people who were also partially sighted.

*"I've learnt a lot, and been pointed in the right direction for support - talking to people in the group and finding out what's helped them has inspired me to get on with things".* Elders Craft and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action beneficiary<sup>185</sup>

Projects reported older people had developed a wide range of new skills through the project which included new practical skills such as accessing the internet and hen rearing as well as personal development skills such as behaviour management and working with others. The skills developed varied across the projects depending on the focus. There appeared to be a degree of skills development across all of the models with a greater emphasis in projects that had a volunteer-led or older people supporting each other focus.

## 6.2 Challenging perceptions of ageing

One of the themes of the Silver Dreams Fund was to challenge perceptions of ageing; however, this was not a key focus for many projects. Typically, projects felt that their project had challenged perceptions of older people to some extent. The work undertaken can be broken down into a number of categories which reflect the different target groups and scales: older people and their families' perceptions; project partners and volunteers perceptions; local community perceptions and national perceptions. In a few cases it was felt to be very difficult to challenge the perceptions of ageing as older people had complex issues and were very vulnerable and this was recognised to be an on-going challenge. Each category is considered in turn below.

### 6.2.1 Older people and their families' perception of ageing

The activities and support older people received often helped to change their own perceptions of what they as 'an older person' were capable of. This was often related to improvements in older people's self-esteem and self reliance. For instance older people in Winchester Area Community Action's Elders Craft and English Exchange project often did not think they had anything to offer but over time they realised that they had skills and could make a positive contribution both within the group but also to the local community.

*"The self belief in individuals has grown in such a way that an awareness of their own self worth has been realised – they have come to realise they have the power to learn, the ability to learn and the confidence to learn."* Elders Craft and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action<sup>186</sup>

In some cases older people felt that they were unable to undertake certain activities due to ill health or disabilities and these negative perceptions of their own abilities were also overcome, usually by focusing on older people's capabilities rather than concentrating on their limitations. Projects sought to gently encourage older people to try new things and help them realise they were still capable of new things despite their age as illustrated below.

<sup>184</sup> Ecorys case study visit

<sup>185</sup> Forwards Together - Derbyshire Blind Association Proforma

<sup>186</sup> Elders Craft and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action Proforma

*“The project has challenged some perceptions of ageing amongst the clients themselves. A lot of the clients felt at the beginning of the project that they were too old or too unwell or not capable of engaging in certain groups and activities because of their age. Being involved in the Silver Dreams project has challenged their perceptions of their own capabilities as they have managed to engage in and enjoy things that they previously thought was not possible.” Silver Solutions - Our Celebration<sup>187</sup>*

Projects that had contact with older people’s families also found that they were able to challenge families’ perceptions of their older relatives and highlight the fact that older people have a voice and should be able to communicate what their own needs are and be listened to. For instance, the Hampton Trust’s **Planning for the Future** project involved a family meeting model which provided the opportunity for older people to express their views and be in control of their future care in the presence of family members. This often challenged these preconceptions of older people’s family members concerning their preferences for their future care<sup>188</sup>.

## 6.2.2 Project partners and volunteers’ perception of ageing

In addition to older people’s perceptions of what they were capable of, projects found that there were also preconceived ideas of older people amongst volunteers and project partners.

Some volunteers were genuinely surprised at what older people were capable of achieving and realised they could challenge older people to do more than they expected. Projects were also able to challenge the perception that older people needed to be prevented from taking part in certain activities. For instance Future Root’s **Countrymen Club** project encouraged the older men to use farming equipment.

*“We have been able to demonstrate the drawbacks of high levels of risk aversion in many institutions, by showing that – often frail – older people can safely spend time on a working farm and that this can have a positive effect on health and wellbeing” The Countrymen’s Club - Future Roots<sup>189</sup>*

Simply spending time with older people helped to change volunteers’ perceptions of older people. For instance volunteers involved in Young Foundation’s **Care4Care** project fed back that they realised from talking to the older people they supported that the older people could impart wide range of useful information and advice which they did not expect. Also the volunteers gained a better understanding of the needs of older people.

*“The volunteers involved reported that their perceptions and knowledge of ageing had changed due to their involvement with the project, and the press attention our project received may have raised awareness.” Care4Care -Young Foundation<sup>190</sup>*

Awareness raising was an important part of changing volunteers perceptions of older people in instances where there was previously a lack of understanding of a particular condition. For example, Scene Enterprise’s **In Good Hands** project trained volunteers to support deafblind people. An important element of the training was raising awareness of the signs that someone may be suffering from deafblindness, which may manifest itself in withdrawal from social situations, or in more physical signs such as unopened mail.

Awareness raising was equally an important aspect of beginning to change partner organisations’ perceptions of older people. As part of RNIB’s **OPTiC** project staff at Age UK were trained in visual awareness. The training meant that staff were more likely to recognise the signs of sight loss amongst beneficiaries at the Staying Active clubs. The training enabled staff to make practical adjustments for older people with sight loss, such as telling older people what food they have on their plate. The training also helped to change attitudes around older people suffering from sight loss.

<sup>187</sup> Silver Solutions - Our Celebration Proforma

<sup>188</sup> Planning for the Future – The Hampton Trust Proforma

<sup>189</sup> The Countrymen’s Club - Future Roots Proforma

<sup>190</sup> Care4Care -Young Foundation Proforma

*"It also challenges misconceptions around older people and sight loss and encourages them to promote older people as assets providing peer support to people with sight loss."* OPTiC - RNIB project staff<sup>191</sup>

### 6.2.3 Wider communities' perception of ageing

Some projects worked hard to develop links with local communities. In some cases this work placed a focus on challenging perceptions of older people.

Work with young people was undertaken by a number of Silver Dreams Fund projects. In some cases this was a deliberate focus of the project. For instance Eccleshill Community and Youth Association's Men @ EccyMeccy project held intergenerational events which helped both older and young people to understand each other better. These events were very successful and also improved the older men's perception of the young people as they were very impressed by the young people's commitment to the events<sup>192</sup>.

In other cases this developed organically during the project lifetime. For instance, at Age Concern Barrow and District's **Barrow Respectability** project one beneficiary asked project staff if they could build a shoe 'cubby' for the local nursery school's cloakroom as part of the men in shed's project. This subsequently led on to other activities with the nursery as well as other local community organisations that could benefit from their woodwork skills.

These intergenerational activities had direct benefits for the young people and older people that took part. However, it is not currently known what difference this will make to perceptions in the longer term. A few of the delivery organisations reported that they plan to continue to support intergenerational activities.

Older people have also been given an opportunity to demonstrate that they are assets to the community which can help to challenge perceptions of older people. For instance, one group of older people that completed the **Active Plus** course decided to set up a group to grow food to support the local food bank. Attending local events provided another route for changing perceptions by giving older people the opportunity to speak or demonstrate activities which was well received. For example the older men involved in Future Roots' Countrymen Club undertook demonstrations of farming equipment at a local agricultural show which was attended by approximately 400 people<sup>193</sup>. However the projects found it difficult to measure the actual difference these activities made to perceptions of older people but they certainly raised awareness of the different roles older people can play.

### 6.2.4 Regional and national level perceptions of ageing

Changing perceptions of ageing at a regional or national level was recognised to be a very difficult and huge undertaking. One stakeholder commented that to change perceptions of ageing on a national level a large investment would be required<sup>194</sup>.

However, a small number of the Silver Dreams Fund project had begun to challenge perceptions more widely. This work focused on highlighting older people as inspirational figures. Projects also raised awareness of the part older volunteers had played in their work. OPAAL's **Advocacy on the Wards** project approached this by creating a book of peer advocate and older people's stories that is being widely circulated.

Other projects had begun to challenge perceptions of older people through the media which included their blog posts as well as articles in both national and regional press as well as radio. The projects involved were aware of the size of audience they had reached through these approaches; however, it is too early to tell what difference these activities have made to regional and national perceptions in the longer-term.

<sup>191</sup> OPTiC -RNIB Proforma

<sup>192</sup> Men @Eccy Meccy – Eccleshill Community & Youth Association Proforma

<sup>193</sup> The Countrymen Club- Future Roots Proforma

<sup>194</sup> Stakeholder consultations

## 6.3 Outcomes for organisations

There have been a number of outcomes for organisations leading Silver Dreams Fund projects. These have typically focused on building organisations' capacity to better serve older people. At the outset, the Big Lottery Fund acknowledged that lead organisations may require support in building capacity so commissioned Hall Aitken to undertake diagnostic assessments for each project. Some projects sourced extra support after their diagnostic assessment, in addition to the evaluation support provided by Ecorys. This included a range of support such as marketing, training, infrastructure support, evaluation and advice on sustainability<sup>195</sup>.

Several organisations found that delivering a Silver Dreams Fund project provided them with the resource and capacity to improve their training of volunteers in order to adequately equip them for their roles as illustrated by the below example.

**Figure 6.3 Case Study: In Good Hands project Scene Enterprises developing capacity**<sup>196</sup>

### **CASE STUDY: SCENE ENTERPRISES - IN GOOD HANDS PROJECT: DEVELOPING CAPACITY**

Scene Enterprises identified that there was a need for a project that trained volunteers to provide support to deafblind older people. However, they lacked the resources and capacity to develop the project. The Silver Dreams Fund has enabled Scene Enterprise to fulfil their vision via the **In Goods Hands** project. **In Good Hands** has enabled Scene Enterprises to work with new partner organisations to deliver volunteer skills to support deafblind people and, going forward, there is scope to work with new partner organisations who have expressed an interest in the training in order to expand their volunteer base further.

In a few cases the Silver Dreams Fund provided the impetus and need for a lead organisation to adopt a more formal structure. For instance, prior to their Silver Dreams Fund project, **the Countrymen's Club**, Future Roots<sup>197</sup> was a social enterprise without a Board of Trustees; however, as a result of being awarded a grant from the Silver Dreams Fund, Future Roots established a Board of non executive directors to act as Trustees. This Board is felt to have been very beneficial as it brought a whole new range of skills and experience and contacts that Future Roots would not otherwise have been able to access.

In some cases, particularly for smaller organisations, the Silver Dreams Fund enabled lead organisations to expand their target group. Organisations that had not traditionally worked with older people felt that their organisation, and other users, benefited from engaging with this group.

*"The Shine50Plus project has helped with the organisation's transition to a members' organisation and brought the older members, who were largely invisible, to the forefront of Shine's work. Re-engaged some very successful older people who lost contact with the organisation as children and have now demonstrated how much they have to offer those coming up behind them and the organisation as a whole."* SHINE50 Plus - SHINE<sup>198</sup>

*"For our organisation the increase in our ability as a community resource to reflect the needs and interests and aspirations of residents in our local community with participants of the project themselves, representing both themselves and our organisation, going out to speak and take part in consultation events."* Community TIME Camden - The Abbey Community Centre<sup>199</sup>

<sup>195</sup> Ecorys project survey

<sup>196</sup> Ecorys case study

<sup>197</sup> Ecorys case study visit

<sup>198</sup> SHINE50 Plus - SHINE Proforma

<sup>199</sup> Community TIME Camden - The Abbey Community Centre Proforma

In some cases, the Silver Dreams Fund projects helped to raise awareness of the lead organisation and the activities that they offer through the project as well as more widely. Typically this has been through the encouragement, and blogging training, from the Fund to use social media. Some projects have embraced social media, with many now realising how it can support their communication with wider audiences and plan to continue to use this medium in the future.

Finally, several projects had not previously conducted full evaluations of their activities and the monitoring and evaluation requirements associated with the Silver Dreams Fund encouraged them to put in place a new monitoring system. One project commented that the monitoring and data requirements of the Fund had provided them with more data on the benefits of their projects than had previously been the case<sup>200</sup>.

## 6.4 Economic value

The following sub-sections present evidence to illustrate different aspects of the economic value which has been generated by the Silver Dreams fund.

### 6.4.1 Value for money

The general approach to assessing the value for money of a programme involves exploration of the relationship between inputs, activities, and the resulting outputs, outcomes and impacts, which can be divided into three components as follows:

- **Economy** – considers the extent to which the right inputs have been obtained at the right price. Projects were asked to ensure that goods and services purchased using money provided by the Fund were secured at reasonable prices and to confirm that such steps had been taken in their end of grant report. The Big Lottery Fund was not prescriptive about how value for money in procurement should be achieved which allowed organisations to be guided by their own existing policies in this area. To provide transparency and accountability, projects were asked to keep full and proper records of all expenditure to show how the money provided by the Big Lottery Fund had been used.

At the programme level, one area of expenditure which was considered by stakeholders to have provided particularly good value for money was the investment in social media tools (blogs, etc.) and associated training for project staff, as this led to high levels of engagement with social media which brought additional benefits including increased profile and awareness of the organisations and their work, and increased sharing and interaction between organisations.

- **Efficiency** – is concerned with the relationship between inputs and outputs. The unit cost per beneficiary has been calculated using information on expenditure (collected by the Big Lottery Fund) and beneficiary numbers (reported to Ecorys<sup>201</sup>).

Across the portfolio, total investment by the Big Lottery Fund was just over £6 million and the total project cost was approaching £6.5 million (funding from other sources accounted for 7% of the total cost).

At the project level, the proportion of funding provided by the Big Lottery Fund ranged from 60% to 100%; around two-thirds of projects did not involve any funding from other sources and where other funding was provided a significant proportion of this was in-kind support from the delivery organisation or other partners.

<sup>200</sup> Project proforma

<sup>201</sup> Source: monitoring data collated by Ecorys (to April 2014). At this point, seven projects had not submitted beneficiary data.

Based on information provided at the application stage, the target number of beneficiaries across the whole portfolio was just under 16,900, resulting in a target unit cost (cost to the Big Lottery Fund per beneficiary) of £357. At the project level, there was wide variation in these target unit cost figures, which ranged from £50 to almost £5,000, reflecting the diversity and varying intensity of the activity proposed.

Monitoring data provided to Ecorys suggests that 11,350 older people have benefited from the programme. This has resulted in an actual unit cost of £423<sup>202</sup>, ranging from £59 to over £10,000 per participant for individual projects and reflecting the diverse nature of the support provided by the Silver Dreams Fund and also differences in the nature or definition of participation between projects. This unit cost is relatively high compared to that of some other types of support which has been provided for older people in recent years (for example, the fit as a fiddle programme was estimated to have an overall unit cost per participant of around £77, which ranged from £36 to £408 at the individual project level<sup>203</sup>), although this finding is likely to be a reflection of the intensity of support which was provided by Silver Dreams Fund projects.

- Effectiveness – relates to whether the outputs achieved resulted in the desired outcomes. The outcomes achieved for both older people and delivery organisations are considered in sections 6.1 to 6.3 above.

A review of project self-evaluation reports reveals limited analysis of the value for money provided to project funders or the economic value of activity. However, some of the reports considered the value to beneficiaries provided by their activity or the wider social value/social return on investment.

#### 6.4.2 Volunteer input

Across the portfolio, 27 projects provided data on volunteer inputs. The number of volunteers recorded by each project ranged from two to 241, summing to 1,859 in total.

Projects were also asked to provide an estimate of the total number of hours contributed by their volunteers and 23 projects were able to provide this data. For these projects, the total number of hours contributed by volunteers ranged from 23 to over 5,500 hours, and the average contribution per volunteer ranged from just under one hour to over 280 hours. In total, volunteers are estimated to have contributed over 47,000 hours of their time, resulting in an average contribution of 25 hours (based on the recorded total of 1,859 volunteers).

Following the approach set out by Volunteering England<sup>204</sup> the economic value of this contribution is calculated to be over £545,000<sup>205</sup>. However, as noted at the interim reporting stage, the benefits associated with the involvement of volunteers must be considered alongside the costs associated with volunteer recruitment and retention (e.g. advertising, interviewing, induction plus ongoing costs such as payment of out-of-pocket expenses, purchase of uniforms, equipment and training).

<sup>202</sup> This figure has been calculated based on the expenditure and beneficiary numbers for the 30 projects for which beneficiary data had been submitted and so should be considered an interim estimate.

<sup>203</sup> Fit as a fiddle – final evaluation report. Ecorys with Centre for Social Gerontology, University of Keele (2013).

<sup>204</sup> See <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/is-there-any-way-of-measuring-the-economic-value-of-the-work-our-volunteers-are-doing&qh=YTo5OntpOjA7czo4OiJlY29ub21pYyI7aToxO3M6OToiZWNVbm9taWNzljtpOjI7czozMjoiZWNVbm9taWNhbGx5IjtpOjM7czozMDoiZWNVbm9taWNhbCI7aTo0O3M6NToidmFsdWUiO2k6NTtzOjY6InZhbHVIZCI7aTo2O3M6NjoidmFsdWVzljtpOjc7czo3OiJ2YWx1aW5nljtpOjg7czo5NDoiZWNVbm9taWMgdmFsdWUiO30=>

<sup>205</sup> Median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime), average for all employees on adult rates of pay at April 2012 = £11.56 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2013 provisional results).



### 6.4.3 Costs avoided or delayed

One way of valuing the benefits of an intervention in economic terms is to look at the costs which are avoided (or delayed) as a result.

In the context of the Silver Dreams Fund, the achievement of positive outcomes by older people as a result of engaging with funded activity had potential to result in a reduced need or demand for other services or support<sup>206</sup>. The survey of older people, which was undertaken as part of the evaluation, attempted to collect evidence of changes in the frequency of use of a range of support and health services. It is recognised that changes in service use or frequency could be caused/influenced by a wide variety of factors (many of which could be external to the project) but the survey also asked beneficiaries to report how much of any change in outcomes they believed was due to their involvement in the Silver Dreams Fund which has allowed some assessment of the influence of the programme to be undertaken.

Across the portfolio, a total of 966 beneficiaries completed both surveys which allowed comparison of their situation on entry to the project (baseline) with that at the end of their involvement<sup>207</sup>.

The survey asked beneficiaries to report whether they received any help around the home and the number who responded positively remained almost unchanged between the two survey points. However, when asked about specific services there was some variation with the most significant change being a reduction of almost 40% in the number of respondents receiving visits from a befriending service (perhaps due, at least in part, to the services provided by the Silver Dreams Fund projects reducing the need for this type of support). Smaller reductions (of around 25%) were reported for use of handyperson services, meals on wheels and other types of support. The survey also revealed an increase in the use of cleaning services (12%). Changes in the use of care services and other support will have cost implications for the funder of these services (which includes the recipient in the case of subsidised or paid for services).

The survey also questioned beneficiaries on their use of health services in the preceding three months (for hospital visits) or past two weeks (for attendance at the GP practice). The findings are presented in the table below and suggest that those who participated in the survey have reduced their use of the specified healthcare services over the period in question. The only category where an increase has been recorded, albeit slight, relates to planned hospital visits, although part of this may be linked to the reduction in emergency appointments which could suggest a positive shift towards more appropriate use of planned health services.

**Table 6.1 Use of health services**

	No. of hospital visits in past 3 months <sup>208</sup>				Visits to GP practice in past 2 weeks <sup>209</sup>	
	Out-patient	In-patient	Planned appointment	Emergency appointment	GP	Nurse
Before	1,229	94	643	96	290	186
After	1,032	84	656	84	231	165
Change	-16%	-11%	+2%	-12%	-20%	-11%

<sup>206</sup> The extent and nature of this change in demand would clearly vary depending from project to project depending on the type of activity delivered.

<sup>207</sup> However, it should be noted that not all responses were complete.

<sup>208</sup> These columns show the number of visits made to hospital for the appointment types/reasons stated.

<sup>209</sup> These columns show the number of respondents who indicated that they had visited a GP or seen a nurse in the past 2 weeks.

Further questioning on the number of GP visits suggests a reduction of 110 visits across the sample at the second survey point (compared to the number of visits reported at the first).

Available service cost benchmarks can be used to approximate the economic value of reducing the need for healthcare services. The PSSRU's Unit Costs of Health and Social Care report<sup>210</sup> estimates a unit cost per patient for GP visits of £37 (assuming contact lasting 11.7 minutes)<sup>211</sup>. Applying this to the reported reduction in visits across the survey sample for the period in question produces a notional saving of over £4,000. This figure can be seen as illustrative of the potential for projects, such as those funded by the Silver Dreams Fund, to achieve worthwhile savings by impacting positively on older people and reducing their need to access other services and support, particularly when estimated across the entire cohort and over a longer time period.

When asked to report the extent to which the Silver Dreams Fund contributed to a change in health and wellbeing outcomes, over half of the sample (53%) suggested that at least some of the change they experienced had been due to their involvement in the project. This indicates that, despite the potential for a multitude of factors to impact on beneficiary outcomes, projects such as those funded by the Silver Dreams Fund can play a part in generating benefits for older people.

<sup>210</sup> <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/project-pages/unit-costs/2013/>

<sup>211</sup> The unit cost of £37 includes direct care staff costs but excludes qualification costs.

## 7.0 Dissemination and influencing policy

This chapter evaluates the blogging activity and influencing policy work that Silver Dreams Fund projects have undertaken throughout the project lifetimes. These findings are largely based on information recorded in project blogs<sup>212</sup>, project proformas<sup>213</sup> and end of grant reports.

### 7.1 Overview of blogging in projects

Projects were requested to provide bi-monthly blog entries as part of their monitoring activity. Projects generally used their blogs:

- to keep up to date with other projects and to share learning;
- as a focal point for project communication and dissemination;
- as a platform to help them recruit volunteers;
- to encourage volunteers and participants to blog about their project; and
- to link to policy commissioners.

By the end of the Silver Dreams Fund:

- Nearly all Silver Dreams Fund projects had set up a blog website for their projects<sup>214</sup>. Only Sheffield Wellbeing Trust's **Altogether Better Living Well** project had opted to use an existing Twitter account instead of a blog, while all other projects used Wordpress or Drupal software to create their project blog sites.
- Over 1,300 blogs were posted by the projects and the average number of blogs posted by projects was 37 blogs.
- Over 2,850 blog followers had been recorded; the average number of followers for each project was 237<sup>215</sup>.

The highest number of blog entries was provided by<sup>216</sup>:

- **Advocacy on Wards**, OPAAL – 178 blogs.
- **Time of My Life**, Aquarius Action – 96 blogs.
- **Silverlinks**, Care & Repair England Ltd – 79 blogs.
- **The Silver Scheme**, Manor Farm Community Association – 59 blogs.
- **Come Dine with Us**, Age Concern Durham – 56 blogs.

The content of the blogs was diverse, but by using tag clouds we were able to summarise the keywords/themes which projects were blogging about (see Figure 7.1). The most frequently blogged keywords/themes appeared to be: people, project, older, support, volunteers, and groups (see Annex 2 for an overview of the most popular keywords/themes for each individual Silver Dreams Fund project).

<sup>212</sup> Up to the date of 15/04/2013

<sup>213</sup> First and follow up project proformas

<sup>214</sup> RECOOP were unable to blog

<sup>215</sup> Project blogs - based on 12 projects that published the number of followers on their blog (SPECS; Active Plus; Plymouth Senior Net; Care4Care; Advocacy on Wards; Men @ Eccy Meccy; Silver Knowledge; Come Dine with Us; Silverlinks; Sunbeams Music with Dignity; Forwards Together and Aquarius.)

<sup>216</sup> Project blogs

**Figure 7.1 Keywords/themes of project blogs**



Source: Silver Dreams fund project blogs and Wordle

Some projects monitored the reach of their project blogs. The **Advocacy on the Wards** project delivered by OPAAL, **Health, Wealth and Happiness** by the Terrance Higgins Trust and the **SPECS** project by Learning for the Fourth Age all referred to the number of visits or posts that their blogs received in their end of grant report. For example, the **Advocacy on the Wards** project successfully attracted 237 registered followers and published 178 posts and 8,531 viewings<sup>217</sup>. The **Health, Wealth and Happiness** project blog recorded 3,900 viewings.

The project blogs with the most followers were<sup>218</sup>:

- **SPECS**, Learning for the Fourth Age - 1,015 followers.
- **Active Plus**, Active Plus Community Interest Company – 409 followers.
- **Plymouth SeniorNet**, Routeways – 297 followers.
- **Care4Care**, the Young Foundation – 261 followers.
- **Advocacy on the Wards**, the Older People's Advocacy Alliance - 237 followers.

### 7.1.1 Benefits of blogging

Overall, projects seemed to have readily adopted blogging as part of their projects, probably encouraged by the training organised by the Big Lottery Fund and the blogging tutorials offered by the evaluation team at the first learning event. Some projects in particular had taken blogging forward and really capitalised on the benefits which it can bring.

<sup>217</sup> End of grant report

<sup>218</sup> Project blogs - based on 12 projects that published the number of followers on their blog (SPECS; Active Plus; Plymouth Senior Net; Care4Care; Advocacy on Wards; Men @ Eccy Meccy; Silver Knowledge; Come Dine with Us; Silverlinks; Sunbeams Music with Dignity; Forwards Together and Aquarius.)

Although most projects were new to blogging at the outset<sup>219</sup>, by the end of the Programme the majority had developed new skills and increased their awareness of the value of using social media to engage people in their projects. Typically projects felt that their blogs worked well and many described blogging as an interesting and useful tool, not only for raising the profile of their projects and recording their progress, but also to link in with other projects, and as a way of networking with local and national organisations. A few projects also praised the Wordpress training they received from the Big Lottery Fund. Some projects expressed that it was quite a daunting experience for them at first but it was something that they soon felt more comfortable with; while other projects felt more confident and were able to hit the ground running.

The **Touchstones** project led by Rural Action Yorkshire regarded their blogging as a positive element of the monitoring process. The project valued the archive of stories blogging had provided for the legacy of the project. For example, the project was able to draw on material from their blogs to help them better illustrate the impact of their project to external stakeholders, such as Age UK. The project's twitter account also proved to be a good platform for attracting volunteers to the project. However, the project felt that blogging was less successful in terms of encouraging wider engagement and would have welcomed some feedback on their blogging from the Big Lottery Fund during the lifetime of the project.

Terrence Higgins Trust's **Health, Wealth and Happiness** project found their blog helped them to recruit several volunteers and an advisory group member. It also attracted the attention of a commissioner that they had not worked with previously. Derbyshire Association for the Blind also tried to recruit volunteers through their blogs, but were unable to conclude how effective this method had been in terms of reaching out to potential volunteers.

For the **Neighbourhood Return** project delivered by Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network, blogging was used as a focal point for all of their project communication and dissemination, and as a way of bringing together interviews, surveys, media and meetings in one place. The project promoted links to other related charities through their blog as a way to keep their members' interest in dementia news and to raise awareness. According to the project, one of the main benefits of their blog was that it promoted a frank and reassuring approach to discussing mental health issues. The project also had a guest blogger who was a carer and member of the project board which was considered to have worked well. In the future, the project plans to further build upon their blogging experience to encourage more open discussion about dementia.

Age UK North Tyneside placed a lot of focus on their blog as a way to share learning about their **Hospital to Home** project and they followed other projects such as Derbyshire Association for the Blind's **Forward Together**, Eccleshill Youth and Community Association's **Men@EccyMeccy** and Age Concern Barrow and District's **Barrow RespectAbility**.

According to the Young Foundation which delivered the **Care4Care** project, their blog was well received, and as blogging was something which they normally did for their other projects, it was natural for them to blog about the **Care4Care** project too. Although they found it challenging in the beginning to get their partners to contribute in this way, they managed to get all of the partners to contribute to their blog during the course of the project.<sup>220</sup>

Scope's **Our Generation** project and the **Silver Solutions** project delivered by York Mind both used their blogs to learn more about the other projects, which was felt to be useful for facilitating discussions and sharing learning. It also made it easier for the project to focus not only on outcomes and delivery, but also on effective communication to wider audiences.<sup>221</sup>

<sup>219</sup> First project proforma and follow up proforma

<sup>220</sup> Care4Care – Young Foundation Proforma

<sup>221</sup> Project proformas

The **Our Generation** project hosted blogging workshops for some of their older people as they recognised the importance of getting volunteers and mentees to talk about their experiences.<sup>222</sup> The project also supported their mentors to write an on-going series of blogs that described their experiences with the project and the impact it had on them as it developed. This led to mentors increasing their interest in the use of social media and blogging. For example, one mentor provided training on the use of social media and went on, in liaison with Scope's Digital Media department, to set up a successful Facebook page for the project.<sup>223</sup>

The **Silverlinks** project run by Care & Repair, and Eccleshill Youth and Community Association's **Men@EccyMeccy** project welcomed the use of blogs for project updates, which provided them with an interesting departure from the usual reporting requirements and added an element of public transparency to what they have done and how the Big Lottery Fund has supported them.<sup>224</sup> **Silverlinks** also made use of case studies on their blog, which were about the older people who were supported by volunteers, to illustrate how this had helped older people to manage change, particularly relating to their housing and care.<sup>225</sup> Age Concern Durham's **Come Dine with Us** commissioned six short films which were posted on their blog and shown at events and talks to promote the activities of the project.<sup>226</sup>

Age Concern Barrow and District's **Barrow RespectAbility** project volunteers were keen to learn more about blogging and suggested setting up their own blog page so that they could communicate with each other outside of their group meetings.<sup>227</sup> The project later reflected on the project blogs as invaluable for keeping up to date with other projects and facilitating sharing learning on an informal basis. Especially as the project was based in a remote geographical location, it meant that it was quite difficult for them to visit other projects located across the UK, due the financial and operational constraints. The blog worked well as it allowed all of its team members to have access to all of the information at any time.<sup>228</sup>

The **Plymouth SeniorNet** project by Routeways also actively encouraged volunteers and beneficiaries to engage with the blogging and social media aspects of their project. Encouragingly, **Men@EccyMeccy** project found that some of their older people were online and used the internet at times when they were not able to get out of their homes.<sup>229</sup>

According to the **Music for Dignity®** project by Annie Mawson's Sunbeams Music Trust, their blog, Twitter and Facebook accounts proved useful for sharing their learning with others. All of the social media generated by the project will be sustained, as their blog will be converted into a general Sunbeams Blog, which will have posts about all their projects and their Facebook and Twitter will continue to be developed.<sup>230</sup>

Due to the success of the project blogs, the Big Lottery Fund would consider using this approach for other programmes, particularly those that have a high volume of grants as the blogs provide useful snapshots of project progress and successes<sup>231</sup>.

<sup>222</sup> Our Generation – Scope Proforma

<sup>223</sup> Our Generation - Scope End of grant report

<sup>224</sup> Project proforma

<sup>225</sup> Silverlinks – Care & Repair End of grant report

<sup>226</sup> Come Dine with Us – Age Concern Durham Proforma

<sup>227</sup> Barrow RespectAbility - Age Concern Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>228</sup> Project proforma

<sup>229</sup> Men@EccyMeccy – Eccleshill Community & Youth Association Proforma

<sup>230</sup> Music for Dignity - Sunbeams Music Trust End of grant report

<sup>231</sup> Stakeholder consultation.

### 7.1.2 Use of other social media

Some projects also used Twitter or looked into developing their Twitter presence. Age Concern Barrow and District's **Barrow RespectAbility** project had local journalists following them on Twitter and also had a local company contact them via Twitter to say that they had raised funds for the project and subsequently donated over £400 to help support the activities.<sup>232</sup> **Elders Crafts & English Exchange** project by Winchester Area Community Action's Twitter feed into their blog was found to be the most effective method of sharing up to date news and activities within the project. Instagram was also used by the project but this was found to be difficult to maintain due to time constraints<sup>233</sup>.

OPAAL's **Advocacy on the Wards** project set up a project Twitter account, and obtained followers including Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Department of Health, Macmillan Cancer Support and British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR). Moreover, they have "*learned that even small project or organisation can punch above its weight when using social media and it provides opportunities to talk directly to decision makers and influencers that were not previously possible*".<sup>234</sup> Advocacy on the Wards (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL

**Forwards Together** project run by Derbyshire Association for the Blind regularly updated their project blog, which they distributed across partner organisations using email and Twitter. A few other projects also mentioned that they used Facebook alongside their blogs, for example Northern Shape's **HenPower** project, by Northern Shape, claimed that their Facebook page was a great success and that it worked much better than their blog.<sup>235</sup> SHINE's **Shine50Plus** project by had also used different Facebook groups as a means of supporting people and sharing information<sup>236</sup>.

### 7.1.3 Challenges of blogging

Blogging was not the sole communication mechanism and some projects preferred to use other routes. Age UK North Tyneside's **Hospital to Home** project found that the best way to link up with other projects was at various Silver Dreams Fund events especially the social media workshop, where sharing project information and discussing common problems was helpful and supportive.

A few projects had experienced issues with their blogs, for example RECOOP's **Personal Plans and Peer Support for Older Prisoners**, highlighted in their first project proforma how they felt social media was always going to be a challenge for them, and that adopting blogging and the use of social media was not supported by the project as a way of sharing information. RECOOP were unable to set up a blog due to Ministry of Justice restrictions on the use of blogs but did send a couple of resource sharing emails to all projects instead.

The **Altogether Better Living Well** project delivered by Sheffield Wellbeing Trust considered the Silver Dreams Fund project blogs as useful for sharing learning between projects. However, the project primarily relied upon its staff to blog, despite the project's attempts to promote it to its volunteers. It was difficult to get volunteers interested in writing blogs or using social media as most volunteers either did not have access to the internet or were not interest in using social media.

Manor Farm Community Association's **Silver Scheme** project also found that blogging was a useful tool for direct contact with older people and for voice their views on services for older people. However, the number of people who followed the weekly posts was somewhat limited. The project felt that this was an issue which could be overcome with further support from the Big Lottery Fund or the website company involved.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>232</sup> Barrow RespectAbility - Age Concern Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>233</sup> Project proforma

<sup>234</sup> Advocacy on the Wards (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL Proforma

<sup>235</sup> Henpower -Northern Shape End of grant report

<sup>236</sup> SHINE 50 Plus – SHINE Proforma

<sup>237</sup> Silver Scheme – Manor Farm Proforma

Derwentside Homes' **Silver Knowledge** project used blogging to inform interested parties about the project, but they did not want older people reading the blogs to feel like unwitting subjects in a big social experiment. They suggested that for the blogs to function as an internal sharing mechanism between projects the blogs should be on a site with restricted access or with a member's login. While the **Men@EccyMeccy** project recognised that without a significant time commitment to blogging and social media it was difficult to maintain content and grow traffic with the amount of website hits they were receiving.

Compassion in Dying's **End of Life Rights Advocacy** project agreed that in theory social media and blogging was a good idea, but found it difficult to see the benefits to older people, who are not users of the internet or know how to find these blogs<sup>238</sup>. However, the project since recognised the benefits of regularly updating their blog, as it enabled them to reach organisations outside of the pilot project locality and it was useful for sharing their learning with a wider audience. They presented the learning and monitoring information from the pilot at national conferences, and it also encouraged them to regularly reflect on their achievements and learning<sup>239</sup>.

Additionally, the **OPTAMISE** project by Options Wellbeing Trust, was initially unsure whether blogging was the most effective way to share knowledge with other Silver Dreams Fund projects, especially considering the number involved and the time it took to review all the blogs<sup>240</sup>. However, the project later reported how they had since benefited from it, as their blog was consistently used to share learning, and highlighted how their blog included an article published by DrugScope, a national charity leading on policy and practice for the drug and alcohol field.

A few projects requested additional training<sup>241</sup> on how they could use Facebook and Twitter more effectively to integrate these platforms into their social media portfolio, or more expert advice on the use of Wordpress for blogs.

#### 7.1.4 Lessons learned from blogging

A number of key lessons were learned in relation to blogging:

- Consider carefully who will be writing the blogs and any support they might need. Some projects were keen to involve volunteers in blogging but found that volunteers were a bit nervous about using the blog. Options Wellbeing Trust's **OPTAMISE** project overcame this by volunteers writing their blog posts and staff uploading them on to the project blog.
- Think about your audience and what type of blogs they would want to read. Some of the projects posted blogs that were very focused on project delivery while others included think pieces to catch the attention of key stakeholders.
- Consider how to track the views of the blog at the outset. A few projects realised towards the end of delivery that it would have been useful to set up Google Analytics to track the number of views to their blog in order to demonstrate the value of their blog as a dissemination tool.

<sup>238</sup> End of Life Rights Advocacy - Compassion in Dying's Proforma

<sup>239</sup> Follow up project proforma and End of grant report

<sup>240</sup> OPTAMISE – Options Wellbeing Trust Proforma

<sup>241</sup> Project proformas



## 7.2 Overview of influencing policy activities undertaken by projects

The majority of projects demonstrated that they were involved in a range of influencing policy activities throughout their projects. Moreover, there were several very good examples of activities which projects had undertaken which were reported in the project proformas and/or blogged about. The main influencing policy activities which projects were involved in included:

- Projects showcased and presented their work at key conferences and events.

### ***Neighbourhood Return, Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network***

*Neighbourhood Return's Service Manager presented at the West Oxfordshire Dementia Conference. It highlighted the importance of local organisations helping them to spread the word to both carers and people with dementia, and with volunteers. The conference was also attended by David Cameron who commented that the Neighbourhood Return scheme was about 'the Big Society' in action, and being there for our neighbours when they need us.*

- Projects featured in national and local newspapers, magazines, specialist newsletters, radio interviews and podcasts.

### ***OPTiC, The Royal National Institute of Blind People***

*OPTiC and Health, Wealth and Happiness produced a podcast 'masterclass' on HIV and eye related conditions. A link to the recording was uploaded onto their respective blogs and organisational websites, and circulated to a number of health professionals across the UK. A combined Evidence Repository for the podcast was made available.*

*The project featured in a radio interview with Mel Austin, where OPTiC Chair aired on RNIB Insight Radio, in February 2013 – which broadcasts worldwide.*

*There were also articles in the York Press and RNIB's Vision magazine reaching a daily readership of 75,232 and a monthly readership of 14,000 respectively. An article also appeared in the Newsletter, Stafford's premier newspaper.*

- Projects hosted and supported shared learning events, workshops and training.

### ***Personal Plans and Peer Mentoring for Older Prisoners, RECOOP***

*RECOOP was invited to contribute to the older prisoner workshop run by the Butler Trust. The workshop, focused on meeting the needs of older prisoners and responding to the challenge of an aging prison population. The project manager was asked in particular to focus on the services that were developed as part of the Silver Dreams Fund project and outlined in detail the Personal Planning System for older prisoners at HMP Leyhill. The detailed assessment and information was passed on to 35 prisons. This led to much interest in helping other prisons develop similar Personal planning systems.*

- Projects published research papers, good practice guides and briefing documents.

***Health, Wealth, and Happiness, The Terrance Higgins Trust***

*The Terrance Higgins Trust developed a good practice guide providing information and advice on delivering services to over 50s living with HIV. The Health, Wealth and Happiness Good Practice Guide was written specifically for commissioners and providers within the NHS, social services and community settings. The guide was designed not only to raise awareness of the needs and challenges facing older people living with HIV but to provide practical advice to professionals equipping them with the knowledge and skills to better commission, design and provide appropriate health and social care services. It brought together key findings from consultation, research and evaluation to share lessons learned and encouraged organisations to adopt best practice when working with older people living with HIV.*

- Partnership with local authorities and local organisations.

***Touchstones, Rural Action Yorkshire***

*Rural Action Yorkshire had a wide range of discussions with Local Authority Public Health directors and Directors of Health and Adult Services about the role of Touchstones and the learning from the project. This influenced a move towards a community asset based approach to services in some of those authorities.*

- Involvement and membership in key working groups.

***Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness, Subco Trust***

*SubCo Trust were involved in key working groups e.g. Safeguarding Board, Dementia Strategy Group, Carers Strategy Group, Newham Clinical Commissioning Group, Stay Well Partnership, Forum for Health and Wellbeing to share good practice.*

- Influenced the Government's policy thinking.

***Silverlinks, Care & Repair England***

*Silverlinks have used their direct links to Department for Communities and Local Government and to Department of Health to influence their policy thinking concerning provision of housing and care information and advice alongside enabling self help and peer to peer support. They were continuing to make representations concerning the provision of information and advice as set down in the forthcoming Care Act.*

- Used older people's knowledge and experiences in focus group research.

***Active Plus, Active Plus Community Interest Company***

*The Active Plus over 50's group took part in focus group for an Active Aging research study carried out by the European Centre for Human Health.*

*Active Plus was also asked to be a member of the health & wellbeing focus group and delivered presentations to various organisations such as Age UK, NHS, Cornwall Carers and some mental health organisation.*

- Supported campaigns and lobbying by older people.

#### ***Forwards Toward, Derbyshire Association for the Blind***

*Some of the older people with sight loss wanted to go on to campaign and do some lobbying, e.g. a participant joined the Hospital Patient Forum in Derby, which may influence policy and practice in the future.*

- Projects and their volunteers invited to speak at parliamentary briefings.

#### ***Come Dine with Us, Age Concern Durham County***

*A Come Dine with Us volunteer was invited speak at a Parliamentary Breakfast meeting with Age UK County Durham's Chief Executive to about the benefits of the 'Come Dine With Us' Project. The Parliamentary briefing was hosted by Baroness Barker, Peter Wanless the Big Lottery Fund's Chief Executive at the time spoke about the Big Lottery Fund's Older People strategy, with a focus on the Silver Dreams Fund and the Big Lottery Fund's proposed new investment areas.*

Annex 3 provides a more detailed summary of the influencing policy activities undertaken by individual projects. These examples are intended as illustrative, rather than exhaustive, of the influencing policy activities undertaken by projects.

### **7.2.1 Challenges of influencing policy**

Several projects indicated challenges with this aspect of their work. All 37 projects had varying levels of success in terms of the impact their efforts had on changing or influencing policy more widely. Time pressure of project delivery and the actual time required for carrying out effective policy influencing activities appeared to be the main reasons why projects had not done as much, or were not as successful, at this aspect of their work as they would have liked. According to **OPTiC** project, by RNIB, *"it can take many approaches before a new partnership is formed and time is needed for this activity."* Some projects also struggled to engage commissioners in the NHS. For example *"the initial drive to gain a foothold in acute services was not successful, partly due to a lack of understanding of the role of the advocate but also due to the organisation aiming the awareness raising at the wrong level."* **Advocacy on the Ward**, OPAAL<sup>242</sup> and the Hampton Trust's **Planning for the Future** project also expressed the difficulties and the persistence required to engage commissioners or senior managers and to convince them to change their model or approach of working.

### **7.3 Overview of the activities of the media partner Daily Mail**

A unique aspect of the Silver Dreams Fund programme was its link up with the Daily Mail as a media partner; which has been in place throughout the programme. The Daily Mail has published around a dozen articles about the Silver Dreams Fund. Just over half of these Silver Dreams Fund articles were published around the time of the programme launch in 2011. These articles were primarily to support the joint campaign to reach out to innovative voluntary and community groups and encourage them to submit their ideas to the Silver Dreams Fund and also to find readers to help to decide how the Big Lottery Fund distributed the fund to support older people. Since the launch, articles have highlighted the work of some of the 37 Silver Dreams Funded projects and a number of articles have drawn out key issues affecting older people, such as social isolation, dignity and care, or ageist stereotypes to illustrate how the Silver Dreams Fund is helping to improve the lives of older people.

<sup>242</sup> Advocacy on the Ward (renamed as COPA - Cancer, Older People and Advocacy) - OPAAL End of grant report

Daily Mail Silver Dreams Fund articles have also attracted some social media activity through comments, Facebook and Twitter shares. On average, each Silver Dreams Fund article has attracted around 16 Twitter 'tweets', 24 Facebook 'likes' and 15 posted comments.

More recently, the Daily Mail featured three articles regarding the Silver Dreams Flagship projects, including details of the selection process, featured projects and additional funding made available. Annex 4 provides an overview of Silver Dreams Fund articles published by the Daily Mail and social media activity associated with these articles.

## 8.0 Conclusions and implications

This chapter sets out conclusions in response to each of the evaluation questions and provides implications for the Big Lottery Fund for consideration in the development of future funding programmes.

### 8.1 Conclusions

#### **What range and types of organisations have been funded through the programme?**

The Silver Dreams Fund supported 37 projects in total, all led by voluntary sector organisations generally working in partnership with one or more partners from the voluntary or statutory sectors. Lead organisations included local organisations, such as Future Roots and the Abbey Community Centre, as well as major national charities such as Terrence Higgins Trust and RNIB.

The Silver Dreams Fund projects aimed to tackle a range of transitions including bereavement, isolation, moving home and making decisions about health care. The projects were all delivered in support of older people; however, some projects focused on specific target groups which included the bereaved, those with dementia, older men and those with a particular disability or illness. The types of activities were designed to cater to the needs and preferences of each target group and the transition they faced. Activities included peer befriending and advocacy support, volunteer-led training sessions, outdoor skills development and opportunities for social interaction.

#### **How have older people been involved in designing and delivering projects and how effective was the nature of the involvement?**

Involving older people in projects has been a key theme of the programme. The level of involvement has been assessed with reference to the Wilcox Guide to Effective Participation which ranges from projects that have no involvement of beneficiaries through to helping beneficiaries to develop and carry out their initiatives. The majority of Silver Dreams Fund projects achieved participation at level 2 (consultation) or level 3 (deciding together). Deciding together was particularly popular with projects with an emphasis on involving older people at the design phase and then continuing this involvement throughout the project, leading to an increased sense of ownership amongst older people. There were indications that some projects had begun to reach level 4 (acting together) with approaches involving co-delivery of sessions. Level 5 (supporting independent community initiatives) is, unsurprisingly, the most difficult to achieve; however, a small number of projects appeared to be close to achieving this level of involvement by supporting older people in taking forward their own groups and activities.

#### **Which models of support are most effective at supporting older people to cope with or manage transitions?**

Silver Dreams Fund projects all focussed on supporting older people towards smooth life transitions. However, projects varied greatly in the groups of older people targeted and the types of activities delivered. All of the project models the evaluation identified included some form of involvement of older people in design, delivery and evaluation, as well as volunteering and partnership working (either to support referrals or delivery). Based on the evidence collected, four broad models of intervention were identified: peer befriending or advocacy; beneficiaries supporting each other; volunteer-led projects; and addressing gaps in service provision. However, many projects adopted a hybrid approach, incorporating more than one of the identified models.

All models were shown to have effective elements and the decision about which model(s) to adopt was found to reflect both the project's target group and the type of transition. For example, a **peer befriending or advocacy** model was found to be particularly effective for health focused projects as it was viewed as a sensitive and appropriate way of providing support to older people with particular health conditions.

**Beneficiaries supporting each other** was seen to be effective in empowering older people to help themselves, as well as others. A **volunteer-led** model worked well in engaging a particular group of older people that could not usually access activities. **Activities that bridge the gap between services** were particularly effective in addressing needs in the health, social care, housing and policing sectors.

## **What has the impact of the different models of intervention been on supporting older people through transitions in their lives?**

Both the quantitative and qualitative evidence suggested that Silver Dreams Fund projects helped to smooth transitions for older people irrespective of the model(s) adopted. Analysis of the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale revealed statistically significant increases in respondents' mental wellbeing for 14 projects which spanned the different types of models identified. Similarly, qualitative evidence illustrated that providing on-going contact with the project and opportunities for getting out of the house made a huge difference to beneficiaries irrespective of how the support was delivered. Typically, projects felt that beneficiaries had increased social contact with other people through the Silver Dreams Fund activities. There were a range of different approaches that led to older people feeling closer to others. However group sessions and mentoring, whether delivered by volunteers or other beneficiaries, appeared to be particularly effective in improving social contact between older people.

Improvements in knowledge tended to be an outcome for projects that supported older people to manage on-going disabilities or illness, as well as practical decisions such as making a will or deciding whether to move house. Across the different types of projects, older people felt that the information they had received had helped them to think about their next steps and to take control of their situation.

## **How innovative or novel are the approaches being delivered by projects?**

The Silver Dreams Fund was intended to support innovation and innovative project models, and interventions to find models that could be expanded or replicated through the flagship grant process. It was recognised that this innovation would tend to be elements of projects that were untested in a particular setting<sup>243</sup>. Project staff and partners also recognised that innovation can be a subjective concept which made it particularly challenging for them to determine whether or not their project was innovative.

The evaluation found that the project models and interventions tested were innovative in some respects, including the use of existing models or interventions in new settings or with a different focus, such as Northern Shape's **HenPower** project which developed a befriending model involving chickens. In other cases projects brought together a range of tested activities in an innovative, such as Age UK Barrow and District's **Barrow Respectability** project which offered a range of activities which were user led and encouraged beneficiaries to be fully engaged in the activities<sup>244</sup>.

In other cases, activities were considered to be innovative as they were new to the delivery organisation or the local community, such as the Abbey Community Centre's **Community TIME Camden's** Saturday Social Club as the centre had not previously offered weekend activities or the concept of using time credits rather than cash to attend sessions<sup>245</sup>. In a few cases projects have identified a niche idea that does not appear to have been undertaken elsewhere in the country such as Age Concern Durham's **Come Dine with Us** project's accredited 'Healthy Eating for Older People' training course<sup>246</sup>.

<sup>243</sup> Stakeholder consultation

<sup>244</sup> Barrow Respectability, Age UK Barrow and District Proforma

<sup>245</sup> Abbey Community Centre, Community Time Camden, End of Grant Self Evaluation Report

<sup>246</sup> Come Dine with Us - Age Concern Durham Proforma

## How have organisations met the themes of the Silver Dreams Fund?

Projects worked towards all of the programme themes. **Helping older people to help themselves** to make smooth transitions was a key aspect of projects both in terms of supporting older people to make their own decisions as well as involving older people in the design, development and delivery of the project. The majority of projects have embraced **working with others** through establishing or building on partnerships with a range of different organisations which had led to benefits both for beneficiaries as well as the partner organisations themselves. Projects were found to have involved many **volunteers, including a high proportion of older volunteers**, in project delivery and some projects had redesigned how they recruit, train and support volunteers. **Testing new ways of working**, as referred to above, was also central to the pilot nature of the Silver Dreams Fund and led to identifying effective approaches to delivery as well as examples.

## What is the potential for scaling up or replicating the different models of intervention that have been tested through the programme?

A key focus of the Silver Dreams Fund was to identify to what extent the pilot projects could be scaled up or replicated to benefit other groups of older people or other older people in different geographic locations. The **Nesta's 'Scaling up' scale** was used to help identify and define the various levels.

The majority of projects reached **level 2<sup>247</sup>** of this scale as they had captured data to show the positive change the project had made to its beneficiaries and volunteers, as well as wider benefits. Most projects captured the positive change for beneficiaries using a before and after survey which included validated scales for life satisfaction and mental wellbeing as well as measures of use of health and social care services.

In addition, many projects developed different types of tools and manuals to aid replication. The intention was that this work would draw upon a robust evidence base but for many projects evaluation evidence was either not available before they did this, or was not strong enough to be certain of causality. Future Big Lottery Fund programmes such as the Fulfilling Lives strategic programmes, and Ageing Better in particular, will allow greater opportunity through the test and learn ethos to enable this to occur and develop a much stronger evidence base and conditions for replication.

## How has the programme challenged perceptions of ageing and led to older people being viewed as an asset in their communities?

Another aspect of the Silver Dreams Fund was to challenge perceptions of ageing. This was not a key focus for many projects although most projects felt that they had challenged perceptions of older people to some extent. The work undertaken covered a number of categories which reflected the different target groups and scales. In some cases older people's perceptions of themselves and their capabilities were challenged through projects which focused on older people's capabilities, rather than their limitations. Raising awareness of older people's skills as well as any additional needs was an important aspect of the work undertaken to challenge project partners' and volunteers' perceptions of older people.

In terms of challenging perceptions of older people more widely, there were instances of projects proactively working with sections of the community, such as older people sharing their skills with young people and older people becoming assets to the community by growing food to support the local food bank. Changing perceptions of ageing at a regional or national level was recognised to be a very difficult and huge undertaking. One stakeholder commented that to change perceptions of ageing on a national level a national level investment would be required. However, there were some examples of Silver Dreams Fund projects that had begun to challenge perceptions more widely. This work focused on highlighting older people as inspirational figures. Projects also raised awareness of the part older volunteers had played in their work. Projects had also begun to challenge perceptions of older people through the media which included blog

<sup>247</sup> Level 2 of Nesta's Scaling Up scale is 'You capture data that shows positive change, but you cannot confirm you caused this'

posts, articles in both national and regional press and via the radio. The projects involved were aware of the size of audience they had reached through these approaches; however, it was too early to tell what difference these activities have made to regional and national perceptions in the longer-term.

### **What has been the economic impact of the programme in terms of savings to the State?**

Available monitoring and funding data revealed an estimated average unit cost per beneficiary of £423, with significant variation in this figure across different projects (ranging from as little as £59 to over £10,000 per participant), which reflects both the intensity and diversity of support which has been provided across the portfolio, and also variation in the definition of participation.

The achievement of positive outcomes by older people as a result of their engagement with projects has potential to reduce their need to access other support or services. The value of this reduction in demand can be estimated based on the benchmark unit costs for delivery of the relevant services, although the extent to which such a reduction in demand can be turned into real (as opposed to notional) cost savings will depend upon a number of factors (such as the flexibility of contracting arrangements).

Although a full cost benefit analysis was beyond the scope of this evaluation, the survey of older people was used to explore change in the use of a range of health and social care services. The survey revealed no significant change in the number of respondents who received help around the home, although there was some variation in the use of the specific services, particularly a reduction of 40% in the number of visits from befriending services which suggests that the funded activity had played a part in reducing the need for this type of support, perhaps by providing alternative forms of social contact. The survey also included questions on GP and hospital visits and the findings suggest a reduction in the frequency of use of these services amongst respondents, which illustrates the potential for projects of this type to help to reduce demand for healthcare services by supporting improvements in older people's health and wellbeing.

It is recognised that this type of self-reporting approach has its limitations, not least concerning estimation of the counterfactual (or the additional effects generated by Silver Dreams Fund activity). However, when asked to report the extent to which the Silver Dreams Fund contributed to a change in health and wellbeing outcomes, over half of the sample suggested that at least some of the change they experienced had been due to their involvement in the project which suggests that the funded activity appears to have played a part in generating a change in outcomes for older people.

### **How has capacity in organisations been developed in organisations that received funding for additional support? How effective is this model of provision?**

There were a number of positive outcomes for organisations leading Silver Dreams Fund projects. These were typically focused on building organisations' capacity to better serve older people. At the outset, the Big Lottery Fund acknowledged that lead organisations may require support in building capacity so commissioned Hall Aitken to undertake diagnostic assessments for each project. Some projects sourced extra support after their diagnostic assessment, in addition to the evaluation support provided by Ecorys. This included a range of support such as marketing, training, infrastructure support, evaluation and advice on sustainability.

Several organisations reported that delivering a Silver Dreams Fund project provided them with the resource and capacity to improve their training of volunteers in order to adequately equip them for their roles. There were also instances of the Silver Dreams Fund providing the impetus and need for a lead organisation to adopt a more formal structure. In other cases, the Silver Dreams Fund enabled lead organisations to expand their target group and/ or raise awareness of the activities they offered.



## **What has been the impact of having a media partner involved in delivering the programme?**

The Daily Mail was involved with the programme on an on-going basis and the involvement of a media partner was a tailored approach negotiated by the Fund's press team. Feedback from internal stakeholders at the Big Lottery Fund highlighted that the partnership worked particularly well at the launch of the Silver Dreams Fund programme with the Daily Mail providing higher levels of coverage than expected. It was always agreed that the majority of the Daily Mail's involvement would focus on the announcements of the initial 37 pilot projects and the Flagships so it was unsurprising that coverage was lighter during the delivery phase.

The Daily Mail utilised its star columnist Bel Mooney for regular features in her columns plus a double page editorial by a staff writer to support the recruitment of two new readers to join the flagship decision making committee in November 2013, the largest piece to date. The Daily Mail through negotiations by the press team also supported the Big Lottery Fund's other older people announcements for Rethink Good Health and the Centre for Ageing Better which were outside the Memorandum of Understanding. The Daily Mail was also willing to help recruit readers for the Ageing Better panel but this was not needed as the Big Lottery Fund decided to retain the readers the Daily Mail had recruited for the Silver Dreams Fund flagship committee.

Overall the internal stakeholders concluded that the relationship built by the press team with the Daily Mail has been of strategic corporate benefit and provided a good platform to engage with the Daily Mail's older readers. The relationship with the Daily Mail has resulted in continued extensive coverage in a national newspaper which would not have been possible on a non-exclusive basis.

## **How has learning from the programme been used to inform wider policy and practice?**

The Silver Dreams Fund was the first Big Lottery Fund programme to have encouraged projects to blog on a bi-monthly basis as part of the monitoring process. This was an area which projects lacked knowledge of initially and were wary of to begin with; however, in time, many saw a real value in this approach and some became prolific bloggers.

At the national level, the external visibility of the programme in the wider ageing sector has been relatively limited. This has mainly been due to the restrictions on dissemination stemming from the flagship funding process and its competitive element. The need to ensure a level playing field for all projects throughout the pilot funding meant that it was often considered inappropriate to pick out particular projects to feature in dissemination activity.

## **8.2 Lessons learned and implications**

This section sets out the key lessons learned and resulting implications for the Silver Dreams Fund Flagship projects and the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better Programme.

### **Programme level lessons learned**

An important learning point for future programmes is to ensure that lead organisations have the capacity and understanding to commission or implement robust impact evaluations and/ or cost benefit analysis. The programme-wide evaluation approach required an understanding of, and buy-in to, a before and after survey of beneficiaries, which projects were asked to administer themselves. Many projects struggled to conduct before and after surveys and did not want to use the survey format with some groups as they felt it was inappropriate or did not see the value of doing so.

The programme was also very diverse in its themes and target groups. It was challenging to agree common or core indicators to measure programme effects and many projects could not agree on core indicators that summed up their project or wanted to focus on specific areas which meant that comparability across the programme was difficult to achieve. This led to five projects opting out of the core indicators altogether. There was also a preference for qualitative research methods in projects' own evaluations rather than quantitative methods. This helped illustrate individual stories of change to practitioners but could not provide the harder evidence that is increasingly required. Finally, there was no use of comparison or control group methods. This was not a requirement of the Silver Dreams Fund programme or project level evaluations; however it may be useful to consider the use of such approaches in future programme, whilst also being mindful of the potential challenges of implementing these methodologies in this type of setting.

In terms of challenging the perceptions of ageing, it was apparent that in order to make a widespread difference there would need to be a more substantial investment in a campaign or project at both the local and national levels. It would also be useful to clarify whether the focus of the work would be on the perceptions of society as a whole or the perceptions of particular groups, such as young people.

### **Project delivery lessons learned**

*Involving older people* in the design, delivery and development of projects was a key theme and was fully embraced by projects. Projects highlighted the importance of *involving older people at an early stage* in order to ensure that they can be involved throughout the development and delivery of the project. Projects were aware of the *need to be flexible* about how older people can be involved and also provide training and support where this is required. In many cases, *time to encourage older people* to make the transition to being involved was needed. In particular, projects were aware of the need to take steps to ensure that all older people, including more vulnerable groups, can be appropriately involved in different aspects of the design, development and delivery of a project.

*Volunteering* was a key aspect of the majority of the Silver Dreams Fund projects. Projects learned many lessons from engaging, recruiting and supporting volunteers, particularly adult volunteers. At the outset, it was valuable for the projects to carefully consider the fit between the profile of the volunteers and the needs of the project to ensure that they recruited suitable volunteers. Once they had been through this process projects had to *ensure that their promotion of the volunteer positions was tailored* to the type of volunteer they wanted to attract, such as local newspaper adverts to attract local older volunteers. Projects were also very aware of ensuring that *appropriate training and on-going support was provided* for volunteers, which included providing extra support for volunteers that are new to volunteering or that low confidence. A few projects also learned the *importance of finding different ways of keeping volunteers* engaged in the project if there were gaps in their involvement.

The Silver Dreams Fund aimed to test the effectiveness of *different delivery models*; however, there were some key lessons from delivering their projects, irrespective of the type of model adopted. Projects found that partners sometimes misunderstood the project's purpose although talking through the project's focus face-to-face tended to overcome this challenge. Projects also became aware that it *takes time to build trust with older people*, particularly more vulnerable groups, such as older people who have been bereaved. An awareness of the type of volunteer and project staff required to effectively deliver a project was also needed. Projects highlighted that face-to-face engagement with volunteers as well as clear marketing materials helped to ensure they recruited suitable volunteers. Through the Silver Dreams Fund, the projects *learned to think creatively about how to ensure staff and volunteers were ready to support new beneficiaries* from the start. Solutions included appointing a paid volunteer coordinator who oversaw the volunteers and could provide short notice support to new beneficiaries if volunteers were unavailable.

*Partnership working* took a variety of forms during the Silver Dreams Fund. Projects found that formal *partnership working was particularly useful where a specific partner is crucial* to the effective delivery of the project e.g. a delivery partner or an organisation with specialist expertise. In other cases projects found *informal partnerships to be very useful for generating referrals*, and to link with organisations that provide complementary or in kind services or expertise. For both types of partnerships, projects learned that time is needed to find suitable partners and to build trust and mutual understanding, and on-going communication is vital to maintain the partnership.

The experience of projects was that engagement with the *statutory sector* – particularly the health sector partners – is challenging. This was a common issue across several projects which limited their ability to develop successful partnerships and deliver the activities or project models they had envisaged. These challenges were primarily due to difficulties negotiating complex structures and hierarchies, finding and talking to the right decision maker, obtaining appropriate permissions and buy in for the project model or activity, and being required to gain ethical approval. Issues with data sharing were also a common barrier to progress. There was a need to be aware that these issues are likely to be problematic for projects funded in this area in future (for example, for areas applying for funding under the Ageing Better investment) particularly where statutory partners are not engaged at an early enough stage or with sufficient lead-in time.

Another aspect of the Silver Dreams Fund was to *challenge perceptions of ageing*. This was not a central focus for many projects although most projects felt that they had challenged perceptions of older people to some extent. In terms of challenging perceptions of older people more widely, there were instances of projects proactively working with sections of the community, such as older people sharing their skills with young people and older people becoming assets to the community by growing food to support the local food bank. Changing perceptions of ageing at a regional or national level was recognised to be a very difficult and huge undertaking. However, there were some examples of Silver Dreams Fund projects that had begun to challenge perceptions more widely by *highlighting older people as inspirational figures* and raising awareness of the part older volunteers had played in their work particularly through blog posts and articles in both national and regional press.

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence suggested that projects helped to *smooth transitions for older people*. Analysis of the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale revealed statistically significant *increases in respondents' mental wellbeing* for 13 projects which spanned the different types of models identified<sup>248</sup>. Similarly, qualitative evidence illustrated that providing on-going contact with the project and *opportunities for getting out of the house made a huge difference* to beneficiaries irrespective of how the support was delivered. Typically, projects felt that beneficiaries had increased social contact with other people through the Silver Dreams Fund activities. Group sessions and mentoring, whether delivered by volunteers or other beneficiaries, appeared to be particularly effective in improving social contact between older people.

The *achievement of positive outcomes by older people* as a result of their engagement with projects has potential to reduce their need to access other support or services. Older people survey findings suggest a *reduction in the frequency of use of GP and hospital services* amongst respondents, which illustrates the potential for projects of this type to help to reduce demand for healthcare services by supporting improvements in older people's health and wellbeing. The funded activity appears to have played a part in generating a change in these outcomes for older people as when asked to report the extent to which the Silver Dreams Fund contributed to a change in health and wellbeing outcomes, over half of the sample suggested that at least some of the change they experienced had been due to their involvement in the project.

<sup>248</sup> Source: older people survey data collated by Ecorys (to April 2014)

**Blogg**ing was a successful aspect of the Silver Dreams Fund. It was also a new approach for many of the projects which led to a number of lessons learned. Projects were keen to involve volunteers and beneficiaries in writing the blog posts but became aware that there was some nervousness about blogging. This was overcome in one instance by *volunteers writing their blog posts down and staff uploading them* on to the project blog. There was also a need to *think about the blog's audience* and the type of blogs they would want to read. Some of the projects posted blogs that were very focused on project delivery while others included think pieces to catch the attention of key stakeholders. Thinking about *how to track the number of readers of the blog* at the outset was also considered to be valuable. A few projects realised towards the end of delivery that it would have been useful to set up Google Analytics to track the number of visitors to their blog in order to demonstrate the value of their blog as a dissemination tool.

## **Annex One: WEMWBS and Life Satisfaction Tables**

### Shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.78</b>	<b>25.48</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Active Plus	24.67	28.02	91	0.000
Come Dine with Us - Age UK Durham	25.50	26.27	74	0.374
Altogether Better – Sheffield Wellbeing Trust	21.04	23.19	48	0.002
Silver Knowledge - Derwentside Homes	22.11	22.78	36	0.487
The Countrymen's Club - Future Roots	26.01	26.85	21	0.519
Relative Experience - Grandparents Plus	18.22	23.44	9	0.006
Planning for the Future - Hampton Trust	22.50	24.00	2	n too small
Going Home - Helena Partnership	19.75	28.25	4	n too small
Community TIME Camden - Abbey Community Centre	21.91	24.04	45	0.000
SPECS - Learning for 4th Age	22.54	23.00	41	0.639
Silver Scheme - Manor Farm Community Association	25.20	26.02	53	0.407
Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community & Youth Association	25.81	26.13	16	0.724
Neighbourhood Return – Neighbourhood Watch Network	17.00	19.00	1	n too small
OPTiC - RNIB	22.11	23.77	44	0.042
OPTAMISE - Options Wellbeing	16.02	21.86	35	0.000
Personal Plans and Peer Support for older prisoners - RECOOP	26.00	27.33	15	0.334
Barrow Respectability – Age UK Barrow and District	19.96	29.88	50	0.000
In Good Hands - Scene Enterprise	18.38	24.88	24	0.000
SHINE 50 Plus - SHINE	24.78	24.44	9	0.763
Forwards Together - Derbyshire Association for the Blind	23.79	27.53	75	0.000
Silverlinks – Care & Repair	21.52	22.65	31	0.229
Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - Subco Trust	14.83	21.67	79	0.000
Music for Dignity - Sunbeams Trust	21.24	25.90	21	0.000
Health, Wealth & Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust	18.77	20.49	47	0.124
Touchstones – Rural Action Yorkshire	27.33	24.33	3	n too small
Elders, Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action	23.04	30.49	45	0.000
Silver Solutions - Our Celebration	17.25	23.88	16	0.000
* Related t-test is significant at 5% if p<0.05				

Source: Ecorys Survey data, n=935

## Satisfaction with life as a whole nowadays

Sample	At the start	At the end	n	p value*
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.74</b>	<b>6.98</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Active Plus	6.68	7.42	78	0.000
Come Dine with Us - Age UK Durham	7.51	7.80	74	0.216
Altogether Better – Sheffield Wellbeing Trust	6.48	7.22	46	0.004
Silver Knowledge - Derwentside Homes	6.55	7.30	33	0.040
The Countrymen's Club - Future Roots	7.95	7.33	21	0.073
Relative Experience - Grandparents Plus	2.75	5.38	8	0.039
Planning for the Future - Hampton Trust	2.00	2.50	2	n too small
Going Home - Helena Partnership	3.50	7.75	4	n too small
Community TIME Camden - Abbey Community Centre	6.38	6.80	45	0.015
SPECS - Learning for 4th Age	6.62	6.64	39	0.943
Silver Scheme - Manor Farm Community Association	6.68	7.38	53	0.008
Men @ Eccy Meccy - Eccleshill Community & Youth Association	6.44	7.56	16	0.031
OPTiC - RNIB	5.93	6.07	41	0.672
OPTAMISE - Options Wellbeing	2.26	5.57	35	0.000
Personal Plans and Peer Support for older prisoners - RECOOP	6.93	7.87	15	0.239
Barrow Respectability – Age UK Barrow and District	6.08	8.38	50	0.000
In Good Hands - Scene Enterprise	4.71	6.25	24	0.000
Forwards Together - Derbyshire Association for the Blind	5.76	6.69	74	0.000
Silverlinks – Care & Repair	6.39	7.25	28	0.045
Empowering Asian elders to cope better with disability and long-term illness - Subco Trust	2.53	5.99	79	0.000
Music for Dignity - Sunbeams	4.79	7.37	19	0.000
Health, Wealth & Happiness - Terence Higgins Trust	4.06	4.64	47	0.098
Touchstones – Rural Action Yorkshire	6.67	6.67	3	n too small
Elders, Crafts and English Exchange - Winchester Area Community Action	7.34	9.71	41	0.000
Silver Solutions - Our Celebration	4.19	6.56	16	0.000
* Related t-test is significant at 5% if p<0.05				

**Source:** Ecorys Survey data, n=891

## **Annex Two: Overview of project blogs**



Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Active Plus Community Interest Company  Active Plus	41	
Age Concern Barrow And District  Barrow RespectAbility	54	

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Age UK Durham County  Come Dine With Us	56	
Age UK North Tyneside  Hospital to Home	28	

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Annie Mawson's Sunbeams Music Trust  Sunbeams Music for Dignity	20	
Aquarius Action Projects  The Time of My Life	96	

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
B:RAP Heart to Heart	17	<p>able advisor asking become beneficiary cardiac caring  change community complete development different  disease enjoy exercise experience family group  health heart help interest learning life  listening meeting motivate offer others patient  peer people person practise programme  project really rehabilitation role services session skills  support talk think training understanding  volunteers women work</p>
Care & Repair England Silverlinks	79	<p>able area attended blog bristol care community event  experience feel future going group help home  housing information involved jeanne  leeds life living local manchester meet moving mrs  needs older options organisations people  plan project provide really recently repair  service session share silverlinks  support talk thinking training update  volunteers work years</p>

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Compassion in Dying  End of Life Rights Community Advocacy	44	
Derbyshire Association for the Blind  Forwards Together	18	

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Derwentside Homes  Silver Knowledge	39	<p>age aimed befriending book care clients community connect  continue county durham evaluation event  facebook falls health help homes  housing information isolation john living local managing money natalie  office older people project  provide reading regular save service  share silver social stay store support  talk telephone twitter university  volunteers week winter year</p>
Eccleshill Youth and Community Association  Men @ Eccy Meccy	22	<p>activities advised attend befrienders care centre  comments community cook discussion eat eccleshill  enjoyed events feel food garden general  group health help home identified  introduced involved leeds life live man meet  members mens museum needs notable progress  really referral salt session shows talk today trip used visit  volunteering walking week years</p>



Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Helena Partnerships  Going Home	15	
Learning for the Fourth Age  SPECS	36	



Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Manor Farm Community Association  The Silver Scheme	59	
Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network  Neighbourhood Return	25	
Northern Shape  HenPower	32	

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Options Wellbeing Trust OPTAMISE	36	<p>alcohol attending awareness better chi clients community drink feedback feel forward general give group health help hospital information interesting leaflet looking medication meet members morning older opportunity optamise people person project questions quite raising really service sessions southampton started support tai talk team thought training unit volunteers week work</p>
Routeways Centre Plymouth SeniorNet	20	<p>access age article beneficiaries community computers contact develop experience family group help homes housing http information interest internet james launch learning links lives local mary months offer older on-line opportunity org people please plymouth project providing psn really seniornet sessions small start support susan team uk volunteers work www year</p>
Rural Action Yorkshire Touchstones	54	<p>activities age along busy chef christmas clients coffee cooking craven delivered different district everyone far festive friends gets group hall harrogate knowledge learning living local meeting month morning north people project ravenous richard rural session settle shared skills started stats support tips together touchstones uk volunteers wakefield week work year</p>

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Scene Enterprises  Northumberland 'In Good Hands' Deafblind Support	54	
Scope  Our Generation	15	



Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
The Abbey Community Centre  Community Time Camden	45	
The Hampton Trust  Planning for the Future	28	




Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
<p>The Older People's Advocacy Alliance</p> <p>Advocacy on Wards</p>	178	<p>advocacy advocates affected age  <b>cancer</b> care community development  dorset end ensure experience family feel fund gateshead group  health help home hospital including independent  information life living local macmillan national  needs <b>older</b> opaal organisations partners patients  <b>people</b> person professionals project  provide report services social  <b>support</b> training treatment uk  volunteer work years</p>
<p>The Royal National Institute of Blind People</p> <p>OPTiC</p>	36	<p>action active age beneficiaries blind club  community continue course dream empowerment event  experiences eye group health help information jayne  local loss months offered officer <b>older</b> optic  partially peer <b>people</b> programme  project promote reach reading rnib service shared  <b>sight</b> silver stafford staffordshire staying  <b>support</b> talk team tracy UK volunteers working york</p>

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
The Terrence Higgins Trust  Health, Wealth and Happiness	21	
The Young Foundation  Care4Care	21	

Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
Volunteer Cornwall  Bereavement Befriending and Advocacy	28	
Winchester Area Community Action  Elders Crafts and English Exchange	4	



Project	Number of blogs	Blog content
York Mind Silver Solutions	25	 <p>access activities along attended challenges christmas city clients  community depression different dreams event  everyone experience group health hear help  hope involved living meeting members mental  mind offer older opportunity organisation  people person project promote provide  really services silver social starting  support talk training understanding update  volunteers weeks working year  york</p>

## **Annex Three: Influencing policy activities**

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
Active Plus Community Interest Company	Utilising Older People's knowledge and Experiences	Active Plus Silverdreams over 50's group took part in focus group for an Active Aging research study carried out by the European Centre for Human Health.
Active Plus	Presentations and member of the health & wellbeing focus group	<p>Active Plus have also been asked to be a member of the health &amp; wellbeing focus group and delivered presentations to various organisations such as Age UK, NHS, Cornwall Carers and some mental health organisation.</p> <p>In April, they were requested to deliver a presentation for the national public health seminar in Exeter.</p>
Age UK Durham County	Parliamentary briefing	A Come Dine with Us volunteer was invited speak at a Parliamentary Breakfast meeting with Age UK County Durham's Chief Executive to about the benefits of the 'Come Dine With Us' Project. The Parliamentary briefing was hosted by Baroness Barker, Peter Wanless BIG's Chief Executive spoke about BIG's Older People strategy, with a focus on the Silver Dreams Fund and BIG's proposed new investment areas.
Come Dine with Us	Response to the draft Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy for County Durham	Age UK County Durham has also recommended that the proposed new 'Healthy Weight Alliance' strategy needs to focus both on people who are obese and those who are underweight, as current health promotion messages regarding healthy eating, tend to overshadow the problems of malnutrition in the community especially amongst older people.
Age UK North Tyneside	Shared learning events	Hospital to Home staff also supported the Northumbria Healthcare's Shared Purpose launch event, which included group work on hospital ward dignity. Sandra Gray (Age UK – Health and Wellbeing Director), was a guest speaker presenting "Northumbria's Partnership with Age UK".
Hospital to Home	Healthwatch North Tyneside	Healthwatch North Tyneside was informed about their project from the outset and supplied information. They attended a Hospital to Home consultation event at North Tyneside and were their guests at the last NHFT Shared Purpose Event.
	Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Newcastle University	A researcher was selected for the Knowledge Transfer Partnership towards the end of 2013 and is now based at AUKNT for a period of 2 years, She will be analysis the results of the project, which will hopefully lead to future improvements in healthcare by highlighting the benefits of services working jointly with the Third Sector and volunteers.
	AUKNT Policy and Campaigns Officer	Iain Kitt has done various presentations on Age UK North Tyneside's behalf to key organisations. He is a Healthwatch North Tyneside Board Trustee (older people's specialist).

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
Annie Mawson's Sunbeams Music Trust  Sunbeams Music for Dignity	Cumbria's Dignity Champions  Event	<p>Because of this project, Sunbeams are now one of Cumbria's Dignity Champions. Cumbria is dedicated to supporting the dignity agenda and Sunbeams are proud to be Dignity Champions.</p> <p>Annie and Sally went along to one of the steering groups to tell everyone about Sunbeams Music for Dignity® and their Silver Dreams Fund Project and ended up getting a gig!</p> <p>They invited Sunbeams Dignity Champion Steven Shears along to a Dignity Champions event in Penrith. By doing this we were able to introduce the learning from their project into the wider Dignity in Cumbria Project.</p>
Care & Repair  Silverlinks	EAC FirstStop  Department for Communities and Local Government and to Department of Health  Various organisation  Lord Filkin	<p>Silverlinks has used the local experience from the project to influence the planning and delivery of a new government backed initiative which is funding 15 new local housing and care options advice and information services being delivered by EAC FirstStop.</p> <p>They have used their direct links to Department for Communities and Local Government and to Department of Health to influence their policy thinking concerning provision of housing &amp; care information and advice alongside enabling self help and peer to peer support. They are continuing to make representations concerning the provision of information and advice as set down in the forthcoming Care Act.</p> <p>In addition, they have been using the learning from Silverlinks to influence the policy positions of the Housing &amp; Ageing Alliance, the Home Adaptations Consortium, Age UK and Foundations with regard to information and advice about later life housing &amp; care.</p> <p>They have highlighted the model and the importance of provision of information and advice about housing and care options in later life at meetings with Lord Filkin, the lead on the 'Ready for Ageing' inquiry and the new chair of the Big Lottery funded Centre for Ageing Better.</p>

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
Compassion in Dying  End-of Life Rights Community Advocacy	ELRA pilot showcased at End of Life conference  End of Life Champions event  National conferences and network events  House of Lords Mental Capacity Act Committee, and Office of Public Guardian	<p>Compassion in Dying was invited to talk about the ELRA project at the 4th Annual End of Life Conference. The talk highlighted the importance of raising awareness amongst health and care professionals about end of life rights and how the ELRA pilot has supported older people towards the end of their lives. ELRA made valuable contacts during the conference with organisations such as Marie Curie, who are keen to know how the service develops.</p> <p>ELRA have been involved in an End of Life Champions event in East London organised by Skills For Care where we have been influencing the development of training tools around of End of Life Care. ELRA are also taking part in an East London Carers summit around end of life care where they will be running a workshop on the use of Advance Decisions and LPA. The London Social Care Partnership for End of Life Care has also invited them to be part of their pan-London network.</p> <p>ELRA have showcased the project at national conferences and network events, as well as creating opportunities to promote the project's achievements the showcasing has enable them to develop new relationships.</p> <p>Learning from the pilot was shared with the House of Lords Mental Capacity Act Committee, and also with the Office of Public Guardian. Age UK (national) have also asked if they can be involved in the roll out plans to help disseminate learning across their networks, and Dying Matters have also offered to assist in this process. At the start of the pilot neither was interested, but because of the evidence being gathered and positive reactions to the project they are now keen to get involved.</p>
Derbyshire Association for the Blind  Forwards Together	Share good practice  Campaign and lobbying by older people	<p>Derbyshire Association for the Blind worked with 'OPTIC' in sharing information, supporting one of their 'Coping with Sight loss' weekends and attended training with the 'Eyes Right kit' in York. In turn they have shared good practice, networked and shared news on project progress.</p> <p>Some of the older people with sight loss wanted to go on to campaign and do some lobbying, e.g. a participant joined the Hospital Patient Forum in Derby, which may influence policy and practice in the future.</p>

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
Future Roots  The Countrymen's Club	Workshops and meetings at local authority level	Future Roots have participated in workshops and meetings at local authority level; they are now contributing to a review of adult and community services for older people in the area. They also hope to use their evaluation to do more dissemination.
Grandparents Plus  Relative Experience	Events  Briefing documents  Reaching local authorities	<p>The dissemination of the project included: The Newcastle event which was held on 12th February and attended by over 60 people who included kinship carers, volunteers and staff from local authorities and their sector organisations. It was a chance to disseminate pilot findings to a wider group of local authorities in the North East. The London event, was held on 26 March, which aimed to showcase the project and is targeted at local authorities.</p> <p>The project also produced three briefing documents: (1) an introduction to kinship care (2) The nature of peer-to-peer support (3) The voices of kinship carers. These have been written for staff who might come across kinship carers or children looked after in kinship care arrangements in the course of their work. They were made available on the websites of the three organisations.</p> <p>Reaching senior social work staff in local authorities is crucial to changing practice around kinship care, for securing referrals for continuation of the project and also to bring about wider application of this model across the UK. The London event had this in mind and its scheduling and publicity aims for a good representation of this group.</p>
Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network  Neighbourhood Return	West Oxfordshire Dementia Conference  Work with the Department of Health and the Cabinet Office	<p>Neighbourhood Return's Service Manager presented at the West Oxfordshire Dementia Conference. It highlighted the importance of local organisations helping them to spread the word to both carers and people with dementia, and with volunteers.</p> <p>The conference was also attended by David Cameron who commented that the Neighbourhood Return scheme was about 'big society' in action, and being there for our neighbours when they need us.</p> <p>At a national level, Neighbourhood &amp; Home Watch Network worked with the Department of Health and the Cabinet Office to see how they could, along with other organisations work to tackle loneliness. A service representative also sat on the Association of Chief Police Officers Missing People strategy group.</p>

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
OPTiC	Podcast	OPTiC and Health, Wealth and Happiness produced a podcast 'masterclass' on HIV and eye related conditions. A link to the recording was uploaded onto their respective blogs and organisational websites, and circulated to a number of health professionals across the UK. A combined Evidence Repository for the podcast has also been made available.
The Royal National Institution of Blind People	Radio interview	
	Newspaper and magazines	
	Presentations	The project featured in a radio interview with Mel Austin, where OPTiC Chair aired on RNIB Insight Radio, in February 2013 – which broadcasts worldwide.
	Partnership with local organisations	There were also articles in the York Press and RNIB's Vision magazine reaching a daily readership of 75,232 and a monthly readership of 14,000 respectively. An article also appeared in the Newsletter, Stafford's premier newspaper.
	Events	
	Working with local businesses	Presentations at conferences such as the Scottish Vision Strategy Conference, relevant hospital teams and organisations supporting older people such as sheltered housing schemes, retirement homes.
	DVD	
	Membership	Widening their partnership with local organisations such as Revival Home Improvement Agency, Royal British Legion, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, York Hospital's Eye Clinic are being developed to roll out the use of the Eyes Right screening tool to staff visiting older people in their homes or come into daily contact with them.
		A number of promotional events in Stafford and York, with some being organised on targeted days for example International Day of Older People and World Sight Day. Engaging Mayoral support and participation at events (Stafford)
		Linking OPTiC services with those provided by local optometrists, dispensing opticians and optical businesses by engaging with Staffordshire's Optical Committee.
		Production of a DVD to share information about what we have done, the benefits of multi-agency working, progress against outcomes and OPTiC's legacy.
		Ongoing membership of Age Action Alliance and member of working group on excluded communities and care sector group.

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
Options Wellbeing Trust  OPTAMISE	Event  Article for its national Drug Link magazine  Workshop	<p>The project promoted its work at the Southern Substance Misuse Event in March 2013. The project was approached by DrugScope a national charity leading on policy and practice for the drug and alcohol field to write an article for its national Drug Link magazine as older adults is currently high on the agenda. This was published in January 2014.</p> <p>The project led a workshop for older adults at the Wessex Alcohol Research Collaboration conference in January 2014 and also had a stall promoting its work. This event was for strategic leads e.g. Public Health as well as practitioners in statutory and voluntary services.</p>
RECOOP  Personal Plans and Peer Mentoring for Older Prisoners	Training Workshop	<p>RECOOP was invited to contribute to the older prisoner workshop run by the Butler Trust. The workshop, focused on meeting the needs of older prisoners and responding to the challenge of an aging prison population. The project manager was asked in particular to focus on the services that were developed as part of the Silver Dreams Fund project and outlined in detail the Personal Planning System for older prisoners at HMP Leyhill. The detailed assessment and information was passed on to 35 prisons. They have since had much interest in helping other prisons develop similar Personal planning systems.</p>
SubCo Trust  Empowering Asian Elders to Cope Better with Disability and Long-term Illness	Key working groups  Learning event	<p>SubCo Trust were involved in key working groups e.g. Safeguarding Board, Dementia Strategy Group, Carers Strategy Group, Newham Clinical Commissioning Group, Stay Well Partnership, Forum for Health and Wellbeing to share good practice.</p> <p>They learned that it was important to find 'non-threatening' ways to work in partnership with statutory sector colleagues, hence the 'learning' event and 'learning points' arising from it.</p>


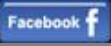






Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
<p>The Hampton Trust</p> <p>Planning for the Future</p>	<p>Presentations and training event</p>	<p>The Hampton Trust's policy influencing activities included:</p> <p>A presentation to Southampton Adult Safeguarding board</p> <p>Training event provided for senior practitioners Southampton</p> <p>A presentation on the Planner to Southern Housing on IOW</p> <p>Presentations to Age UK lunch clubs Freemantle, Shirley, Thornhill and Harefield</p> <p>Stall at the 'My Life a Full' life day conference Cowes</p> <p>Presentation to memory Service Newport</p> <p>They have also convinced Adult Services senior managers of the merit of the service and were able to demonstrate with a small number of successful meetings the potential value.</p>
<p>The Older People's Advocacy Alliance</p> <p>Advocacy on the Wards</p>	<p>The Big Welsh Advocacy Event</p> <p>OPAAL featured in Agenda, a newsletter on Ageing</p>	<p>OPAAL were invited to speak at about their project at Big Advocacy Event, which organised by the National Network for Older People's Advocacy in Wales. There was interest from several representatives of advocacy organisations from across Wales. OPAAL look forward to working together with these organisations and to explore how this work can be taken up in Wales.</p> <p>OPAAL has also featured on the front page of AGENDA, a newsletter of the English Forums on Ageing. The OPAAL article looks at the benefits of independent advocacy for older people in the care personalisation process and the emerging themes which OPAAL thinks older people will be interested in.</p>
<p>Rural Action Yorkshire</p> <p>Touchstones</p>	<p>Influencing local authorities</p>	<p>Rural Action Yorkshire had a wide range of discussions with Local Authority Public Health directors and Directors of Health and Adult Services about the role of Touchstones and the learning from the project. This has influenced a move towards a community asset based approach to services in some of those authorities.</p>
<p>Routeways Centre</p> <p>Plymouth SeniorNet</p>	<p>Press Coverage in the Plymouth Herald</p>	<p>An article about Plymouth SeniorNet's first beneficiary printed in the Plymouth Herald. The article is about a 94 year-old Plymouth man that decided to learn how to use a computer for the first time to enable him to stay in contact with his family more and help him with day-to-day life.</p>


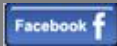

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
Scene Enterprises  Northumberland 'In Good Hands' Deafblind Support	Use of SROI to influencing Government policy	Scene Enterprises's project included an SROI evaluation, working with New Economic Foundation, which will be rolled out and further evaluated as part of the flagship with a view to influencing Government policy in relation to people with acquired deafblindness and neurological conditions.
Sheffield Cubed  Altogether Better Living Well	Events  Partnership working across services	Older Peoples Event developed partnership working with the local authority and partners from health.  Project leads encouraged involvement, participation and partnership working across services supporting older people, and developed good relationships and pathways which are a strong foundation for influencing policy and practice in the future.
The Hampton Trust  Planning for the future	Paper on 'Maintaining Choice and Control' for Older People	The Hampton Trust published a paper on 'Maintaining Choice and Control' for Older People. Older people often have difficult choices to make and many are unsure as to what options are available to them. This paper explores solutions for older people in order for them to maintain control on plans for their future.
The Terrance Higgins Trust  Health, Wealth and Happiness	Good Practice Guide  Community Event	The Terrance Higgins Trust developed a good practice guide providing information and advice on delivering services to over 50s living with HIV. The Health, Wealth and Happiness Good Practice Guide was written specifically for commissioners and providers within the NHS, social services and community settings. The guide was designed not only to raise awareness of the needs and challenges facing older people living with HIV but to provide practical advice to professionals equipping them with the knowledge and skills to better commission, design and provide appropriate health and social care services. It brought together key findings from consultation, research and evaluation to share lessons learned and encouraged organisations to adopt best practice when working with older people living with HIV.  The guide also includes stories and videos of older people who volunteer for the project who are living with and affected by HIV. The good practice guide was launched at a community event hosted by the Chief Executive of Terrence Higgins Trust with Lord Chris Smith as a keynote speaker. The event was attended by 103 people including service users. It gave older people the opportunity to hear from and network with mentors, key donors, senior Terrence Higgins Trust staff and each other.


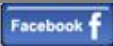

Project	Policy influencing activity	Summary
The Young Foundation Care4Care	Danish Visit  Press and engagement with other organisations	<p>The C4C pilot has attracted interest from the Health and Care Department of Aarhus, Denmark. The Young Foundation organise a presentation and Q&amp;A session at the Quay Arts Centre, Newport for a group of 19 Danish delegates. They were interested in C4C pilot as they want to set up the C4C and the Good Neighbour Scheme in Denmark as a response to funding cutbacks in Denmark.</p> <p>The project a number of press mentions about the project during the pilot. They also engaged a large number of third sector organisations, public sector organisations, and private companies. These meetings were to gather support for the project but also to ensure that it was possible for the project to expand if successful.</p>

## **Annex Four: Daily Mail articles**

Daily Mail articles	Summary			 comments
<p><b>BEL MOONEY:</b> <b>Who should look after my lovely girl when I die?</b></p> <p>By Bel Mooney</p> <p>1 March 2014</p>	<p>I'm so thrilled that the Big Lottery Fund has doubled its planned funding to £10 million for its Silver Dreams Fund flagship projects.</p> <p>Ten outstanding projects have now received an average of £1 million each to help older people across England deal with key life changes.</p> <p>For example, a Grandparents Plus project, Relative Experience, reminds us that many older people are taking care of children in the North-East who can't be taken care of by their parents.</p> <p>My favourite was HenPower, which works with older people in residential care, training them to become hen keepers.</p> <p>In a similar way, Come Eat Together, run by Age Concern in Durham, feeds people, teaches them about nutrition, and offers merry companionship.</p>	21		None shown
<p><b>Can an open marriage with my unfaithful husband really work?</b></p> <p>By Bel Mooney</p> <p>29 Nov 2013</p>	<p>Esther Rantzen has launched her brilliant project, The Silver Line, with the help of £5million of lottery money.</p> <p>Esther's dream was that The Silver Line would befriend the lonely, offer advice and support, and restore self-esteem to isolated older people.</p> <p>Obviously, it would be best if such men and women could get out to a club like June Davenport's or one of the projects helped by the Silver Dreams Fund, a joint venture of the Mail and the Big Lottery Fund. But that's not always possible — and that's where The Silver Line comes in.</p>	16		None shown

Daily Mail articles	Summary			 comments
<b>'Heart-tugging letters that make me weep for the plight of our lonely elderly': BEL MOONEY calls for Mail readers to help her spend £6m of Lottery money to tackle a crisis that shames us all</b>  By Bel Mooney  21 Nov 2013	<p>This newspaper is continuing to throw its weight behind the Big Lottery Fund's inspiring Silver Dreams Fund, which is part of a wider campaign to distribute National Lottery grants totalling £110 million to the most worthy projects.</p> <p>At the next decision panel, to be held in London in February, the committee will decide which of at least five projects out of the 12 that have applied will receive another £1 million each. This will allow them to develop the valuable work with older people that they started with their initial funding from the Big Lottery Fund.</p>	68		8
<b>£70million fund to tackle the epidemic of loneliness: Mail joins forces with Lottery to improve lives of older people</b>  By Rebecca Evans  25 March 2013	<p>Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better is a joint initiative to distribute grants to charities and organisations to help tackle loneliness.</p> <p>The scheme follows the 2011 launch of the Silver Dreams Fund, a joint initiative between the Mail and the Big Lottery Fund, which has so far awarded more than £6million to 37 inspirational projects, with another £5million to follow next year.</p>	51	52	45
<b>Grandmother forced to spend two weeks in hospital without once being offered a shower</b>  By Emma Clark  5 July 2012	<p>Family say Dorothy Middleton, 77, also contracted MRSA and was treated rudely by staff at Pinderfields hospital in Yorkshire.</p> <p>Last month the Daily Mail and the Big Lottery Fund awarded more than £6million to charities and organisations helping to improve the lives of older people, as part of a joint initiative known as the Silver Dreams Fund.</p>	10	15	84
<b>£6m for Silver Dreams: Daily Mail and Lottery join forces to help over-50s</b>  By Claire Ellicott  18 June 2012	<p>Joint initiative is part of wider campaign to distribute National Lottery grants totalling £110million to the most inspirational and worthy projects.</p> <p>Money will be given to causes that enhance lives of over-50s and recognise the contribution they make to society.</p>	28	64	1

Daily Mail articles	Summary			 comments
<b>Hope from despair: How the £6million Silver Dreams is set to transform the lives of those elderly people most in need</b>  By Bel Mooney  18 June 2012	<p>I asked the Big Lottery Fund to give me some sort of steer on how many people - the length and breadth of the country - will be helped by the 37 projects.</p> <p>After calculations, they came up with the impressive number of those who'll be glad of this Big Lottery Fund/Daily Mail initiative: in total, around 16,690 beneficiaries and 3,700 volunteers.</p>	6	5	0
<b>BEL MOONEY: Why won't my family forgive me for drunkenly seducing my niece?</b>  By Bel Mooney  28 April 2012	<p>Do you remember the Silver Dreams Fund? Last September, the Mail helped to launch this Big Lottery Fund initiative to fund projects to help older people in exciting and innovative ways.</p> <p>I first wrote about Silver Dreams on October 1 and the paper followed up with many other articles as the applications for funding poured in. Daily Mail readers applied to be on the judging panel. Now we can jump forward to Tuesday, when I and the three chosen readers joined experts to make the crucial decisions.</p>	4	25	0
<b>Three days left to share in Silver Dreams £10m crusade to improve retirement</b>  By Daily Mail Reporter  25 October 2011	<p>Thousands of community groups have applied to a £110million lottery fund which aims to transform the lives of older people.</p> <p>Around 2,000 ideas were submitted to the Silver Dreams Fund in the hope of winning a share of National Lottery funding – but time is running out for projects still hoping to apply. All ideas must be received by Friday to be considered for funds from the Big Lottery Fund (BIG).</p>	16	4	10
<b>She sold my designer tops for £2 as jumble but Mum was still a marvel: Angela Rippon on why she backs our Silver Dreams crusade</b>  By Angela Rippon  6 October 2011	<p>Last Friday, the Big Lottery Fund and the Daily Mail launched the Silver Dreams Fund, to offer £110 million of National Lottery grants to help older people.</p> <p>We're asking our readers to nominate projects which will support them and help to make their retirement the time of their lives.</p> <p>TV's Angela Rippon is an ambassador for the fund. Here, she tells the moving story of her remarkable mother Edna.</p>	6	1	5

Daily Mail articles	Summary			 comments
<b>Community groups in goldrush for the Silver Dream millions</b>  By Louise Eccles  5 October 2011	<p>Dozens of community groups have already applied to a new lottery fund which aims to transform the lives of thousands of older people.</p> <p>Last week the Daily Mail helped launch the Silver Dreams Fund – the first part of a £110million initiative by the Big Lottery Fund to help the older generation live more independently and make the most of their retirement.</p>	7	11	1
<b>Help us help the elderly: Readers wanted on lottery panel to spend £110m</b>  By Daily Mail Reporter  2 October 2011	<p>Three Daily Mail readers will help to decide how the Big Lottery Fund distributes National Lottery grants to support older people.</p> <p>The Big Lottery Fund has launched the Silver Dreams Fund, in association with the Daily Mail, to help older people get more involved in their communities and recognise the contribution they make to society.</p>	9	11	6
<b>Too often, the elderly are seen as a burden. What madness. In our youth-obsessed age we need them more than ever</b>  By Daily Mail Reporter  1 October 2011	<p>What better proof of the importance of the new Silver Dreams Fund, a joint venture by the Mail and The Big Lottery Fund, to promote a positive approach to life for older people?</p> <p>This exciting initiative will flag up the contribution older people make to society, as well as encouraging them to have more input in shaping the areas where they live. And not before time.</p>	20	19	7
<b>How you can make those Silver Dreams come true: Daily Mail's £110m crusade to improve retirement</b>  By Vanessa Allen  30 September 2011	<p>The Silver Dreams Fund, which will distribute the first £10 million over the next 18 months, is seeking nominations for projects in England that would benefit from grants from the Big Lottery Fund, which has awarded £3.6 billion to good causes since it was set up in 2004.</p> <p>Organisers want to hear from innovative voluntary and community groups that help older people to cope, or which encourage them to use their own life experience to help others.</p>	18	53	4